DAILY NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

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Hello, toy boys! Don't mind the age gap

INSIDE TIMES2

Caitlin Moran's Celebrity Watch

Middle-class parents are subsidising 300,000 'hidden' Neets

Ben Clatworthy Whitehall Editor

More than a quarter of young people who are not in education or work are living off the Bank of Mum and Dad at home, a report into the youth unemployment crisis has found.

Almost one million people aged 16-24 are classed as Neets — not in education, employment or training. However, about 300,000 do not claim benefits. They are said to be "hidden", given that they are not seeking state support, either financially or to find work.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) found that 80 per cent of the hidden Neets are living with their parents. Some 82 per cent of the cohort are aged 22-23 and are actively looking for work, volunteering or in a "temporary transition", such as a post-university gap year. More than half of this group have a degree, compared with 12 per cent of those Neets claiming benefits.

Alan Milburn, the former Labour health secretary, is carrying out a review into the youth unemployment crisis and warned earlier this year that hidden Neets were "one of the most troubling findings" of his research.

But Jed Michael, a research economist who carried out the IFS study, said: "Some of the recent policy discussion on hidden Neets has assumed that they are a particularly vulnerable group that has fallen through the cracks in government support and so demand particular policy attention.

"However, our research suggests [they] are much more likely to have good job prospects than Neets receiving benefits, less likely to have been Neet for a long time and relatively few report poor health or a disability."

Hidden Neets are typically eligible for at least £4,000 a year in benefits, which they are not claiming. Despite this, just 7 per cent said they were finding it "very difficult" to manage financially

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ADRIAN DENNIS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Esprit de corps The King and President Macron were in jovial mood as they viewed the Bayeux Tapestry at the British Museum before it goes on public display. Page 3

'Vibes' won't defend UK, Burnham told by Labour

Defence select committee chair says PM must commit to 3% of GDP as Tories set out their plans

Oliver Wright Policy Editor
Steven Swinford Political Editor

Andy Burnham has been told "vibes alone" are not enough to keep Britain safe in a warning that coincided with a Tory promise to raise defence spending by slashing the welfare budget.

The prime minister has repeatedly refused to set out a timetable to increase defence spending to 3 per cent of GDP by 2030, which would cost £10 billion. Yesterday he was attacked by Tan Dhesi, the Labour chairman of the defence select committee, who called on him to "urgently commit" himself to finding the extra money "imperative" to Britain's security.

"Defence is definitely one area where vibes alone just isn't going to be enough," Dhesi told Burnham at prime minister's questions.

The former Labour defence secretary Lord Hutton of Furness said that, by delaying its plan for raising defence expenditure until the spring spending review, the government was leaving the UK ill-equipped to deal with growing Russian aggression.

"I don't think President Putin is going to wait until the Treasury conducts its next CSR [comprehensive spending review] before he decides what his next course of action might be," Hutton told Times Radio. "He could make that decision imminently, and we've got to understand that."

In an attempt to increase the political pressure, Kemi Badenoch announced that a Tory government would meet the defence target by slashing the welfare bill. She said it would save more than £5 billion by cutting housing benefit allowance and imposing VAT on Motability vehicles.

The Tories plan to reduce the amount of housing benefit paid to families in the most expensive parts of the country. Up to £26,000 a year is paid to a family living in a three-bedroom house in London, while for the largest

Continued on page 2

Trump: I'm happy Harry and Meghan have quit US

David Charter Washington

President Trump has said he is happy that the Duke and Duchess of Sussex have left the US for a new life in Britain.

Trump accused the couple of treating the royal family "with great disrespect" and singled out Meghan as being "terribly disrespectful" to the late Queen Elizabeth and King Charles.

Trump would "not have taken them back" if it was up to him, he added.

The president has long been critical of Meghan, calling her "nasty" in 2019 when The Sun asked him what he thought of her criticism of him during his 2016 presidential campaign.

Yesterday he was asked for his thoughts on Harry and Meghan returning to Britain during an Oval Office question-and-answer session.

"I'm happy about it," said Trump, 80. "I was not a fan."

"Look, I had a very good relationship with the Queen, really good, I got to know her very well," he added, also touting his "really good relationship" with Charles. "I knew him as Prince Charles and King Charles," he said. "I've known him for a long time, he's great, [a] great guy and I thought they [Meghan and Harry] treated the royal family with great disrespect.

"I didn't like it, I didn't like the way she acted. I thought she was terribly disrespectful to the Queen, to King Charles and, I don't know, maybe I'm different, I wouldn't have taken them back. If I were the royal family, I would not have taken them back."

Meghan called Trump "divisive" and "misogynistic" in 2016 two years before she married Harry. She absented herself from Trump's state visit to Britain in 2019 while on maternity leave after the birth of the couple's first child, Archie.

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News

Today's highlights

7am **Anna Turley**, the border security minister
8.20am **Richard Tice**, deputy leader of Reform UK
10.45am How To Win An Election with **Polly Mackenzie**, **Daniel Finkelstein** and **Sally Morgan**
3.35pm The TV critic and broadcaster **Scott Bryan**, right, on his book *Out Now: A Queer Journey Through Modern Television*
5.30pm **Sir Lawrence Freedman**, emeritus professor of war studies at King's College London

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How has Giorgia Meloni lasted this long?

Tomorrow, Giorgia Meloni will break the record for the Italian prime minister who has served for the longest continuous period since the Second World War. Her sceptics predicted she would last only a few months. How has she managed it?

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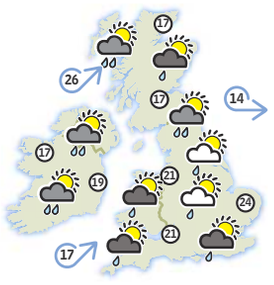

Outbreaks of rain and showers in the north. Largely dry in the south.
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Polanski faces challenge from own party for Starmer's seat

Geraldine Scott Assistant Political Editor
Daisy Eastlake Political Reporter

Zack Polanski's hopes of standing in Sir Keir Starmer's seat could be scuppered by his own party members who may prefer a Palestinian candidate or a pro-Gaza independent.

The Green Party leader is widely expected to put himself forward for the Holborn & St Pancras by-election, having previously said that he would "almost certainly" stand if a vacancy arose in a London constituency.

However, leaked WhatsApp messages seen by The Times showed Green activists and supporters pushing rival plans to select a British Palestinian or co-operate with Andrew Feinstein, the independent who came second to Starmer at the general election.

Polanski, who joined local campaigners in the seat on Tuesday, said that the by-election would be a "referendum on ending rip-off Britain". He added that he was "proud of his record" as Green leader and "very excited for the next chapter" after a year in the role.

However, some Green supporters were pushing for other options. Matt Barker, a former Green council candidate in Lewisham, directly asked two people in the "Greens for Palestine" public chat group whether they would consider seeking the nomination. He wrote: "Would either of you, as British Palestinians, consider standing in Holborn & St Pancras? I'd love to help elect a Green Palestinian."

Barker then urged other Palestinians in the group to put themselves forward and offered to "help as much as I can to help win the seat".

Greens for Palestine is not an official party group, but contains many party members. Mothin Ali, the party's deputy leader, is a member of the group, which has backed a number of Green candidates.

Ali was reported to also be interested in putting his name forward for the Holborn & St Pancras candidacy, but Green Party sources denied this.

In the WhatsApp group, another participant said: "I can't help but feel that a Palestinian candidate that challenges Labour hard, even beats them, in Starmer's old seat would be epic."

Others argued that the Greens should stand aside for Feinstein, a prominent pro-Palestinian campaigner, or persuade him to join the party and seek its nomination. One member wrote: "Greens should co-operate with him to win against [the Labour Party] candidate. Greens won't win there."

A Greens for Palestine spokesman said: "We believe it would be both right and just for a Palestinian MP to replace such an awful prime minister and member of parliament, so that the wrongs committed by this British government under Starmer's leadership might be laid bare and maybe even partially redressed."

Polanski stopped short of confirming his candidacy, but said: "Only the Greens have a real plan for real hope and change. Keir Starmer's legacy is not a legacy to be proud of, it is a legacy of shame — one that only the Greens can draw a line under and offer a real alternative."

Earlier this year, he listed Holborn & St Pancras among the constituencies he could target. Local Green members are expected to choose a candidate by the end of next week, while Labour will have its pick in place by Wednesday.

The Green Party was contacted for comment.

It's now or never for Polanski, Hugo Rifkind, page 21

Green deputy 'misused' taxpayer funds

Geraldine Scott

The Green Party deputy leader has used thousands of pounds of taxpayers' cash meant for council work to partly fund his national role, the party's own councillors have claimed.

Mothin Ali received £5,800 in a special responsibility allowance (SRA) from Leeds city council after allegedly telling fellow Greens the national party was not adequately supporting its leadership team. But two of the party's councillors have called for an investigation and for Ali to be suspended.

Cristiana Mirosanu, one of the councillors, said the Leeds Green group agreed on May 19 that Ali would receive the allowance after he said the "national Green Party isn't adequately supporting the leadership team including him". Ali denied he had said this. SRAs are meant to support councillors who take on extra duties in the council. The Green Party has since said the allowance was given because Ali acts as a spokesman for the council group.

However, Mirosanu claimed no discussion took place in May about him taking on a role and it was only on August 10 that the group agreed Ali would become a spokesperson for the Leeds Greens. She claimed the role's duties were not discussed but Ali said he had already been carrying out the role unofficially.

Mirosanu and fellow Green councillor Eden Hills reported the matter to Leeds city council, which is investigating. Mirosanu said that when she and others later raised repayment, they were told doing so would constitute "an admission of guilt" and would therefore not be considered.

She called on the Green group to repay the allowance, issue a public apology and suspend Ali and the group leader, Penny Stables, while there was an investigation.

Ali's lawyers said: "Councillor Ali strongly denies any impropriety in the allocation of SRAs by the Green Group of Leeds city council. He has consistently gone above and beyond in discharging both his responsibilities as a councillor and his additional role as spokesperson for the Green group."

A Leeds city council spokesperson said: "Given the concerns raised, the council has agreed to review the circumstances surrounding the nomination for receipt of the allowance, based on the evidence available to us."

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Labour's defence spending

households the rent cap is as much as £36,000. Conservative sources said it was "unfair" for families on benefits to live in areas that people in full-time employment can struggle to afford.

Under the plans, the government's £35 billion-a-year housing allowance budget would be cut by about 10 per cent to about £31 billion, saving £4 billion to invest in defence.

Badenoch said she would remove the VAT exemption on cars bought through the Motability scheme, which allows people to use disability payments to buy a car, and would save £1 billion. Further savings would be found by reintroducing the two-child benefit cap and redirecting investment away from areas such as green energy.

A Labour Party spokesperson said: "Dodgy Tory economics won't fund Britain's defences. The British people won't forget Kemi Badenoch's Conservatives hollowed out our armed forces. This proposal uses the same money they've already spent on other things."

Burnham and his chancellor, John Healey, who resigned as defence secretary over Sir Keir Starmer's failure to commit himself to the 3 per cent target, are facing an increasingly difficult task to find the extra money. UK borrowing costs have reached their highest level since the 2008 financial crash, wiping out almost half the government's £24 billion fiscal headroom. Gas prices have surged to levels not seen since 2023, increasing fears that the Bank of England will have to raise interest rates to control inflation.

Dhesi said the public should be under no illusion that the nation faced a significantly increased threat, especially from Russia. "We have a US leadership for whom European security is no longer a focus or priority. That is why it is imperative that we invest in our armed forces in the here and now rather than be sorry later," he said.

"Defence is definitely one area where vibes alone just isn't going to be enough. Rather than kick the can down the road, will the PM urgently commit to a pathway to reaching 3 per cent of GDP on defence by 2030, which, as his chancellor rightly noted, is critical to keep our country safe?"

Burnham said he had "made that commitment", but No 10 later said this meant he would set out a timetable in the spring to hit the 3.5 per cent Nato spending target by 2035.

PM seeks to calm markets, page 6
Magical thinking pervades Labour on spending, leading article, page 23

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Parents subsidising Neets

compared with 12 per cent of those who are claiming benefits.

The IFS research found 37 per cent of hidden Neets come from households in the top third of the national income distribution, compared with 6 per cent of those who claim benefits. Only 2 per cent of hidden Neets are out of work due to sickness or disability, compared with 27 per cent of those on benefits.

A source close to Milburn said there was still a long-term cost to being a hidden Neet. His team, based at the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), analysed data from the 2021 census and found that of those young people in work at the time, 83 per cent were still in work three years later. But those in the hidden Neet group at the time, for example because of a gap year, had a 67 per cent likelihood of being in work in the 2024-25 financial year.

Milburn said: "Over 300,000 youngsters falling through the gaps as hidden Neets shows there is no system to help them into earning or learning."

The DWP said: "Every young person deserves the chance to build a future they can be proud of, and our Jobcentres are available to support those including graduates trying to find work."

Warring past inspires celebration of two countries 'woven together'

The King and President Macron felt the weight of history at a viewing of the Bayeux Tapestry, writes **Jack Blackburn**

MARK CUTHBERT/GETTY IMAGES; ISABEL INFANTES/REUTERS; ADRIAN DENNIS/AFP

Above and left, the King and Queen welcome Emmanuel and Brigitte Macron to the Bayeux Tapestry Exhibition; right, George Osborne, chair of the British Museum, where the artefact is on loan until July next year; below left, Marie-France van Heel, the wife of Andy Burnham

What a difference a millennium makes. In 1066, the King of England and the Duke of Normandy were working hard to put arrows in each other's eyes. In 2026, the most famous record of that battle is being used as a symbol of amity between the two nations, the leaders of which greeted each other with handshakes rather than swords.

Time heals all wounds, even if it took years of warring to get there, and the latest set of stitches have come from the Bayeux Tapestry. The King and President Macron came to the British Museum before what will be a unique cultural exchange and a blockbuster exhibition, the like of which has not been seen since Tutankhamun's treasures arrived in the UK 54 years ago.

People have queued for hours to get Tapestry tickets, but being the successor to the embroidery's chief protagonist allows you to skip the queue for a private viewing, and to bring an important guest without whom this occasion would not have been possible.

"Je vous remercie mille fois," the King said to Macron — "I thank you a thousand times."

On the face of it, this was a commonplace piece of diplomacy — handshakes, smiles, grinning schoolchildren waiting to see the show, warm and prescripted words. Yet, in the grand sweep of history between these nations — a story for which the Tapestry was the starting flag — the evening seemed like a moment of note. We do not have to go too far back in history to find a time when it would be unimaginable for the King of Britain and the leader of France to meet like this. The tapestry speaks of deep-rooted Anglo-French enmity; now they are longstanding allies.

"We have defended our values together in times of peril: we continue to do so today across the world," the King said after the pair had looked at the artefact. "May this Tapestry — and the treasures that will travel in return — stand as symbols not only of our shared past, but our shared future: a future woven, as it should be, by Britain and France together."

It was a night of friendship and humour, though with nods to the fact that we live in a time where a war of conquest is once again rearing its head in Europe. Macron said that we were bound not only by our shared culture but also "the principles we defend and the responsibilities we shoulder together". He spoke of the two nations playing "a full part in ensuring the security of the European continent" and acknowledged Andy Burnham for making his first foreign trip to Ukraine last week.

The event had begun a few miles away with tea at Clarence House, which was a chance for the King to renew a friendship forged by Macron's heartfelt commiseration during the mourning for Queen Elizabeth. Macron even had the chance to look his gift horse in the mouth: in this case, it was Fabuleu de Macour, a horse he had given to Queen Elizabeth.

After a short car ride to Great Russell Street, the two heads of state took in the embroidery that was an almost immediate record of the Norman Conquest and which has, after more than 900 years, been returned to the land where it was made. It has commanded £2.5 million in ticket sales for the British Museum, a record for the 273-year-old institution.

Accompanied by Burnham and his wife Marie-France van Heel, the King, Queen, president and Brigitte Macron listened intently to the curators as they were shown the Tapestry. At the end they were told that, despite its 224 to 230ft of length, it left 1,000 years of history untold. Burnham joked to Macron: "Made in England, they couldn't bear to show the end ... too difficult." The French president smiled. "Happy end," he said. "We're here." The King laughed.

The road to lending the Tapestry was an epic in and of itself. It was 2018 when Macron announced that he would work to bring it to these shores. "It has required a little patience," he said. "But since the first British request dates back to 1931, I choose to regard eight years as something of a speed record."

Britain has played no small role in the political career of Macron, a story which is about to hit the buffer of term limits. He campaigned in London for the votes of 200,000 French expats in 2017. Now, in the final months of his stay in the Élysée Palace, he has made a diplomatic move which will win him gratitude in that same city, even when it is in short supply at home. No one is more grateful than his host.

"I well remember our discussing this possibility during our state visit to France in 2023," the King said. "It is a particular joy, therefore, to see the hope become reality."

The King opened his speech and delivered other parts of it in French, and he praised Macron for his "certainty" that this display in London was "for the benefit of the peoples of both our countries, the best possible symbol of that *entente amicale*, of which we have both spoken so fondly".

There were jokes too. The King queried both words in the title of the Tapestry. It was made not in Bayeux (that is merely where it usually resides) but in Kent, and it is not technically a tapestry. The King suggested that it should perhaps be called the "Canterbury Embroidery" and also acknowledged his descent from William the Conqueror.

"I am informed that the 13th century Treaty of Paris may sadly affect any claims to be the current duc de Normandie," he jested, no doubt to the relief of the numerous Foreign Office ministers in attendance.

Macron mentioned the fact that the Normans brought wine over with them. "The French," he said, "having always had a certain sense of priorities."

The King said: "I cannot help but feel that its protagonists, on both sides of the Channel, would look with satisfaction on the Franco-British gathering here today, and be pleased that our two great nations, which share such fundamental values, have prospered together across the tides of history.

Burnham thanked Macron for the "elaborate, 70-metre reminder of one of Britain's biggest defeats", one that he noted showed a leader emerging from a northern territory and heading to the south of England in search of the crown. "Something clearly that couldn't happen today," he said.

A supreme example of cultural diplomacy, leading article, page 23

News

Six-year-olds reporting to A&E for their mental health

Eleanor Hayward

Children as young as six are attending A&E to seek help for a mental health crisis as their families have "nowhere else to turn".

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) data showed that 6,269 children aged six to nine attended A&E with mental health problems last year, up 62 per cent since 2019. The organisation said more children were "reaching crisis point" and that thousands were having to wait at least 12 hours in A&E with problems such as self-harm, anxiety or eating disorders.

Last year 75,491 children under 18 attended emergency departments with a mental health concern, up 36 per cent since 2019. Rates have risen highest among primary school-aged children.

A lack of hospital beds and space on paediatric wards also means there has been a threefold rise in the number waiting more than 12 hours, while more than 300 had to wait at least three days in A&E last year. Nurses said that the "noisy, brightly lit" departments are frightening and inappropriate settings for children in mental health distress.

The RCPCH has called on the government to use the upcoming mental health strategy to focus on prevention and improved access to early support so fewer children reach crisis point. Sam Jones, the RCPCH officer for mental health, said: "Emergency departments are a vital safety net, but they were never designed to be a place where children in mental health crisis wait for days at a time."

The Department of Health and Social Care said: "Later this year, our mental health strategy will set out our long-term plans to build a system that helps people earlier and ensures fewer young people end up needing emergency care."

PHIL WILKINSON

Cowslips? **Highland cattle roaming in a field of flowers at Wild Hill in the Scottish Borders. Hillhouse Farm is a pick-your-own flower field open at weekends**

'Deep connection' links ME and other chronic fatigue illnesses

Eleanor Hayward Health Editor

Scientists have unlocked a "biological secret" that may explain why people with five major illnesses suffer from chronic exhaustion, paving the way for new treatments.

They found "striking biological similarities" between myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME), long Covid, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), rheumatoid arthritis and multiple sclerosis (MS). All the conditions cause similar symptoms including profound fatigue and brain fog,but are triggered by different events, ranging from viral infections to psychological trauma. They had previously been considered separate and unrelated disorders.

However, by examining the DNA structure inside the cells of people living with all five diseases, scientists found that the diseases "appear deeply connected", with all five showing signs of a similar "systems failure" involving the body's immune response. The study, led by the University of East Anglia and Oxford Biodynamics, suggests there is "a biological unifying theory of fatigue."

Researchers said their findings could be particularly consequential for patients with ME, also known as chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS), which does not currently have any diagnostic test, meaning patients often struggle for years to get a diagnosis.

Professor Dmitry Pshezhetskiy, the lead researcher, said: "ME/CFS and long Covid are currently diagnosed largely through symptoms, with no universally accepted laboratory test available. That has left many patients facing years of uncertainty.

"We hope our work could pave the way for objective blood tests capable of identifying underlying biological signatures rather than relying solely on patient-reported symptoms."

The five illnesses are triggered by different events or processes: ME is usually triggered by a viral infection; PTSD by traumatic experiences; long Covid by infection with Covid-19; rheumatoid arthritis is an autoimmune disease that attacks the joints; and multiple sclerosis attacks the nervous system.

Pshezhetskiy said that "one thing that links them all is that patients frequently report remarkably similar symptoms: overwhelming fatigue, brain fog, poor concentration, disturbed sleep, autonomic dysfunction and a dramatic reduction in everyday functioning".

He added: "What we discovered is something approaching a biological unifying theory of fatigue."

Rather than simply looking at genes, the study looked at the "3D architecture" of how DNA is structured within cells. This revealed the illnesses all have genetic changes that influence the same major biological systems, including the immune system, inflammatory signals, mitochondrial energy production and stress-response mechanisms.

Pshezhetskiy said: "At an individual gene level, there was surprisingly little direct overlap between long Covid, ME/CFS, PTSD, multiple sclerosis and rheumatoid arthritis.

"But when we analysed how those genes interact in complex biological networks, a completely different picture emerged. Suddenly, the diseases appeared deeply connected. Although these conditions are triggered by completely different events, they may ultimately disrupt the same fundamental biological systems and produce the similarly devastating exhaustion experienced by millions worldwide."

The study, in the Journal of Translational Medicine, also suggested that people with ME may have "worn out" immune cells, which could explain why patients are stuck in a state of chronic illness after the original trigger, such as a viral infection, has disappeared.

Quintagram® No 2663

Solve all five concise clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Sacred (4)

_ _ _ _

2 Of considerable distance (4)

_ _ _ _

3 English county (7)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _

4 Cherish, hold dear (8)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

5 Annual festival (9)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

A	A	C	E	E	F	G	H
H	I	K	L	L	L	M	N
N	O	O	O	O	R	R	R
R	S	S	S	T	T	U	Y

Solutions see T2 MindGames p15
Cryptic clues T2 MindGames p14

Glitter denies abuse

Gary Glitter has denied abusing a girl repeatedly after luring her to his home with chocolate. The singer and convicted sex offender, 82, is accused of assaulting her between 1978 and 1981, when she was aged between eight and 11. Glitter, real name Paul Gadd, appeared at Southwark crown court via video link from HMP Channings Wood, Devon. A trial was set for November next year.

Sussex deaths inquest

A six-year-old girl was the fourth member of her family to die in rough seas off Shoreham, West Sussex. Saja El-Khawas suffered a brain injury in the water after being resuscitated, an inquest was told. She died in hospital on August 21. Her parents and sister died after being pulled from the sea on August 18 by the RNLI. The inquest was adjourned.

Lennon's son is father

Sean Ono Lennon, the son of John Lennon and Yoko Ono, has announced the birth of his first child. The musician, 50, above, said he and his partner Charlotte Kemp Muhl, 39, had "created a human bean" named Aurelius. Kemp Muhl, a musician and model, said they had been playing the infant music including "Aphex Twin and Stravinsky".

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Letby's doctor 'boyfriend' named

Dr Mark Deakin was fired from Alder Hey after investigation into relationship, **Tom Ball** and **Ben Ellery** write

JACOB KING/PA

Dr Mark Deakin had been protected by a court anonymity order that has been lifted. The paediatric consultant worked alongside Lucy Letby, below, at Countess of Chester Hospital, above, before moving to Alder Hey

A married doctor who was sacked after exchanging inappropriate messages with Lucy Letby about a baby she attempted to murder can be named for the first time.

The Court of Appeal lifted an anonymity order protecting Dr Mark Deakin, 53, yesterday, ruling that the justification for concealing his identity no longer applied after his death.

Deakin had arranged for Letby to make three or four "observational visits" to Alder Hey Children's Hospital in December 2016, six months after her final murder when she was assigned to non-clinical duties because senior consultants had raised concerns about her.

The paediatric consultant and married father had worked alongside Letby on the neonatal unit at the Countess of Chester Hospital during the 12-month period in which she committed her crimes. He joined Alder Hey three months before arranging the visits.

He was found unconscious in his car at a retail park 20 miles from his Cheshire home on June 24, the day after his dismissal. He was admitted to intensive care but died nine days later. An inquest into his death is due to take place.

The order lifting Deakin's anonymity was made by Lord Justice Singh after an application by Associated Newspapers, supported by The Times, and after the court considered representations from his family. Alder Hey remained neutral on whether his anonymity should be lifted.

Deakin had been granted anonymity as a witness at Letby's criminal trial, but the order protecting his identity applied only during his lifetime.

"In the sad circumstances which have now arisen, when [Deakin] is no longer alive, the rationale of the underlying order ... is no longer relevant," the judge said. He expressed his sympathies to Deakin's widow and family but said the restrictions could not be maintained given the principles of open justice and the media's right to report fairly on court proceedings.

Letby, 36, is serving 15 whole life terms after being found guilty of murdering seven babies and attempting to murder seven more at the Countess of Chester Hospital between June 2015 and June 2016. Her direct appeals have been exhausted and the case is being reviewed by the Criminal Cases Review Commission.

On June 23, Deakin was sacked after a three-day disciplinary hearing, the culmination of an 18-month formal investigation by the NHS hospital into his relationship with Letby.

The investigation centred around a series of three or four "observational visits" to Alder Hey that Deakin had arranged for Letby in December 2016, three months after he left the Countess.

At the time of the visits to Alder Hey, Letby was assigned to a non-clinical role in the Countess's risk and patient safety department, having been removed from the neonatal unit after concerns were raised about her by senior consultants.

The investigation also concerned a formal complaint submitted by the mother of one of Letby's victims regarding messages he had exchanged about the child's condition.

Deakin gave evidence at Letby's trial under the cipher Dr A. As he entered the witness box, Letby began to cry and attempted to leave the dock.

Handwritten notes found by the police at Letby's home stated that she "loved" the doctor. On one she had written: "My best friend ... LOVE ... I loved you and I think you knew that ... I wanted you to stand by me but you didn't."

At the trial, Nick Johnson KC, the prosecutor, suggested Deakin, who exchanged more than 1,300 Facebook messages with Letby, was her "boyfriend" and that she was infatuated with him. The jury was shown text messages in which she sent him love hearts and was told that the pair had been on a trip to London together, gone out for meals, visited the Cheshire Oaks designer shopping outlet and spent time at her home. Facebook data showed that she had searched for his wife's profile.

One nurse who worked on the unit told The Times after the trial that they were "unusually close" for colleagues. "I know there was gossip and comments about this on the ward, which [Letby] didn't like," the nurse said. Another nurse who was close friends with the murderer, and who cannot be named for legal reasons, told Letby that she was being "flirty" with the registrar.

Letby had earlier texted the friend to say that the doctor had sent her a "strange" message. The friend asked what it was, then jokingly suggested: "Go commando?". Later in the WhatsApp conversation the friend asked whether the registrar was being "as flirty as u". Letby replied: "Shut up! I don't flirt with him certainly don't fancy him just nice guy."

After Letby's conviction in August 2023, Deakin informed Alder Hey of his involvement in her trial and the observational visits he had arranged.

Managers initially concluded that he had not known about the suspicions surrounding Letby and that hospital procedures had been followed.

However, a complaint received days later from the mother of Baby N prompted the hospital to open a formal investigation in January 2024.

The investigation concluded that Deakin had a very close relationship with Letby and was likely to have known that colleagues had raised concerns about her possible connection to the rise in deaths. It found that he arranged the visits regardless, potentially putting patients at risk. It also found that he had accessed Baby N's medical records inappropriately, including after Letby's conviction.

At a three-day disciplinary hearing in June, Deakin accepted that he had breached Baby N's confidentiality but denied knowing that Letby was suspected of harming babies when he arranged the visits. The panel rejected his account and dismissed him for gross misconduct on June 23.

Four people charged with killing newborn baby stabbed 15 times

Sian Bradley

Four people have been charged with murder after a newborn baby girl was found dead with 33 wounds from 15 separate stabbings, a court heard.

The body of the baby, named only as Baby S, was found on top of a washing machine in an outhouse at an address in the Wincobank area of Sheffield on Sunday, a district judge at Sheffield magistrates' court was told.

Andrea Skopova, 20, Peter Horvath Jr, 19, Peter Horvath Sr, 38, and Nina Horvathova, 37, appeared in court yesterday and were charged with the murder of Baby S. All are Slovakian nationals and required interpreters.

Luke Hopkinson, prosecuting, said that Skopova is the mother of Baby S, but the father is not known.

Horvath Jr, Horvath Sr and Horvathova, all of Holywell Heights, and Skopova, formerly of Robey Street, Grimesthorpe, Sheffield, are also charged with causing or allowing the death of a child and perverting the course of justice by cleaning a crime scene. A 15-year-old girl, who cannot be named for legal reasons, was charged with perverting the course of justice.

Family members in the public gallery wept as the details were heard.

"A female baby known as S was born in the early hours of Sunday August 30 at an address in Holywell Heights," Hopkinson said, adding that Skopova gave birth at 37 weeks and shortly afterwards presented at a hospital.

Medical staff there alerted the police shortly after 5am and officers attended her home address, responding to reports of a concern for the safety of an infant, but the baby was not there. They checked the address in Holywell Heights, where the baby was located.

Hopkinson said: "When attending, police located a baby wrapped in towelling and in a blue bag on top of a washing machine in an outhouse. The baby was deceased. She has 33 wounds from 15 separate stabbings. A doctor confirmed she would have been alive when the attack took place."

The court was told that a potential weapon was recovered, which is being examined, as well as CCTV footage. District Judge Tim Spruce remanded all five defendants in custody to appear before the court today.

South Yorkshire Police Detective Chief Inspector Tom Woodward said: "This is a significant step in our investigation into the tragic circumstances that resulted in the death of this baby.

"I would like to thank our communities, who I know will have been deeply impacted by this traumatic incident, for supporting us as we work through this intricate investigation."

PM seeks to calm markets as rising mortgages loom

Steven Swinford Political Editor
Emma Powell
Jack Simpson Money Reporter

Andy Burnham used his first prime minister's questions to attempt to calm the markets amid warnings of rising mortgage rates and further increases in energy bills.

The prime minister insisted that his government would be "grounded in fiscal responsibility" after the cost of borrowing hit the highest level in nearly two decades. However, Burnham declined to rule out further borrowing or tax rises in the budget as he attempts to balance the books.

Economists believe that the government's £24 billion worth of fiscal headroom — a cushion against future spending — has been halved by the impact of the Iran war.

Property experts have urged people to lock in deals before a potential rise in mortgage rates. The rise in the cost of borrowing has led to an increase in swap rates, which lenders use to guide their pricing for loans.

Rachel Springall, from the comparison site Moneyfacts, said: "A global bond sell-off has put increasing pressure on the wholesale funding costs that underpin the pricing of fixed-rate mortgages. Rates could be set to soar because swap rates have jumped ... over the past week, reaching 30-day highs. This does not bode well for borrowers."

Chris Sykes, from the broker MSP Financial Solutions, said: "This isn't the largest jump in recent history but swap rates are going up to a level we haven't seen in a while. If anyone was waiting for rates to return to what they were in January and February, they are going to be waiting an awful long time."

Lord O'Neill of Gatley has urged Burnham to act on the pensions triple lock

European gas prices rose to their highest level in more than three years, raising concerns about the level of gas storage in the UK.

Households are already facing a £60 rise in energy bills in October with further increases expected in January after the next price cap is set.

In the Commons, Kemi Badenoch, the Tory leader, asked Burnham what he would do to reduce Britain's debt and whether he was preparing to raise taxes. He did not answer the questions directly, but instead blamed the rising cost of borrowing and market turbulence on the Conservatives' legacy.

Badenoch pointed to a warning from Lord O'Neill of Gatley, a senior ally of Burnham, that the prime minister's tone during his Commons debut on Tuesday would have unsettled investors. She said: "Lord O'Neill is a serious economist. He knows what he's talking about and ... yesterday the cost of government borrowing rose to its highest in 18 years. How does he plan to tackle the government's rising debt costs?"

Burnham replied that he and O'Neill did "not always agree", before turning to the Tory legacy. He said: "When they were in government, we saw 14 years of stagnant growth. We saw 14 years of debt rising as a percentage of GDP. I would say to her that the turbulence on global markets are because of that exposure that they left behind."

He added: "We are turning that corner, Mr Speaker. In the first half of this year, we've had the fastest growth in the G7. Borrowing fell to its lowest level in six years. We're cutting the deficit faster than any other G7 country."

Both O'Neill and Sir Charles Bean, a former official at the Office for Budget Responsibility, called for the state pensions triple lock to be scrapped after the surge in bond yields in recent days.

Mohamed El-Erian, the former boss of bond giant Pimco, also said that Burnham "cannot borrow his way out of this" and warned that Britain was increasingly vulnerable to recession.

The Labour leader's ambitions for overhauling how the UK state operates are likely to be curtailed by the economic headwinds caused by the Iran war. He said: "We are taking the action needed to get debt down. This will be a government grounded in fiscal responsibility. It will stick to the fiscal rules, but ... we will help reduce cost-of-living pressure on our constituents, and that's the approach that we will take."

O'Neill, a former Conservative minister and Goldman Sachs economist, told Times Radio that the budget on October 28 would have to include either spending cuts or "some form of tax increases" to restore the government's fiscal "headroom".

Sir Howard Davies, the former chairman of NatWest, said the country faced "a very dicky period" leading up to the budget and called for the government to "make some signs about their overall approach to the fiscal balance" in order to "calm things down a bit".

Burnham declined to "write the budget" at the dispatch box when pressed on whether he planned to raise taxes.

Badenoch said: "The markets are clearly worried that we now have a spendthrift prime minister who wants to say yes to everyone but cannot tell us where the money is coming from. He needs to pay for all his new promises, and he has a choice: higher taxes, more borrowing, or spending cuts. Yesterday, he said change begins with honesty. So, will he be honest and tell us? Is he preparing to raise taxes again? Yes or no?"

Burnham said: "I've already indicated my first moves were to cut tax, but I'm not going to do what any prime minister has done and write the budget here. That will be the matter for my right honourable friend [John Healey, the chancellor]. He and I took a deliberate decision to set an early date for the budget so that we reduce the period for prolonged speculation of the kind that she is wanting us to indulge in today."

Britain gives US a glimpse of its future, Juliet Samuel, page 19

Analysis

Just like those who came before him, Andy Burnham entered No 10 with soaring ambitions and promises to change Britain for the better (Steven Swinford writes).

But, like his predecessors, he is discovering the limits placed on those ambitions by the towering level of Britain's debt and parlous state of the public finances.

Both his first address to Parliament on Tuesday and yesterday's prime minister's questions were a case in point.

After a summer touring the UK and promising to help people with the cost of living, he wanted his first appearances in the Commons as prime minister to embody confidence and optimism. He promised "substantial" change and pledged to be "relentless" in pursuing public control of Britain's utilities. The roots of Britain's economic malaise, he said on Tuesday, lay with Thatcherism, austerity and the economic damage caused by Brexit. The way out, according to Burnham, is devolution, putting power in the hands of communities and with it generating "good growth in every postcode".

The bond markets, however, had other ideas. Burnham's debut was overshadowed by the news that the cost of government borrowing had risen to the highest level in 18 years. News of fresh US strikes on Iran led to a surge in the price of oil. Traders are pricing in interest rate rises later this year and economists think Burnham's fiscal headroom — a cushion against future spending — has halved.

Which means difficult decisions are coming: tax rises look inevitable and spending will have to be cut. And all this against the backdrop of the need to increase defence spending to 3 per cent of GDP by 2030, a £10 billion a year commitment.

It meant that there was a degree of cognitive dissonance with Burnham saying one thing and the markets telling a different story. Lord O'Neill of Gatley, a senior ally of Burnham, said there was a tonal issue. He told LBC: "The tone of it — implying a lot more government spending to take control of X, Y and Z — is the last thing that investors want to hear when they've got all of this going on in the background. They're like 'who's going to get real in this country about the challenges of getting our debt down and controlling public spending'."

For now, the markets — and everyone — must wait for clarity.

Andy Burnham and Louise Haigh, the Cabinet Office minister, were caught in the rain on their way to prime minister's questions. Kemi Badenoch asked Burnham how he was going to tackle the government's rising debt bills

Spot the difference with

Tom Peck
Political Sketch

From the very moment the Labour MP Josh Simons agreed to stand down in Makerfield, taking his first steps along what will surely be the road to Wigan peerage, the now prime minister has had one soundbite he prizes above all others. "Politics done differently" is what Andy Burnham has promised, time and time over, and always with the same rejoinder: "problem-solving, not point-scoring."

But one problem he will have to solve is that every Wednesday at noon, he is very much required to take part in a lengthy session of point-scoring, otherwise known as prime minister's questions.

Both on TikTok and in the flesh, Burnham continues to look extremely pleased with himself and well he might. It is a remarkable rise to power. He rose at the dispatch box for his first PMQs wearing the kind of look one imagines Paul Daniels might have worn when he rose to give his wedding speech — the look of a man who can't quite believe his luck.

It's sad, isn't it, to consider that it just won't last. That we've seen it all before. We know that, from here, the only way is down. The 21st century has offered more evidence than most that prime ministers don't get to keep a sacrificial portrait in the attic.

Not everyone looked quite as thrilled as Burnham. Even though there will soon be no such thing as a Sir Keir Starmer, not in the House of Commons anyway, there is still such a thing as a Starmerite. Peter Kyle, the late though still alive business secretary, stared straight ahead for 45 long minutes, his chin only rarely becoming unmoored from his fists. He looked like that angry bald eagle from the Muppets, the one with the late Alistair Darling's eyebrows.

It brings me no pleasure to report that politics done differently did not arrive. We began with a short speech, in which Burnham spoke of his excitement about an imminent meeting with His Majesty the King and President Macron, at the UK installation of the Bayeux Tapestry. That he pronounced it "buy-o", which presumably is some

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Prisoners to be freed early next month doubled

Matt Dathan Home Affairs Editor

Nearly double the number of prisoners will be freed next month than had been originally planned after ministers made last-minute changes to the early release scheme.

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) published a revised timetable under which 1,350 prisoners will be freed over a fortnight, starting on October 1.

Plans published on Sunday showed only 700 were intended to be released next month.

A further 650 will then be released on November 10 and 550 on December 8.

It means that more than 2,500 prisoners will be released early under the scheme by Christmas — more than half of the 4,500 to be released in the first year of the scheme.

It is understood that the last minute change in the timetable is designed to stop prisons running out of space amid fears that the other measures to free up capacity announced by the MoJ will not take effect until next year.

Meanwhile, plans to deport foreign criminals immediately after they have been sentenced have been described as "immoral" because they will leave victims without justice.

From January foreign criminals will be eligible for removal from the UK without having to spend time in prison, leaving them free to live in their home countries without restrictions on their freedom. There will be no obligation for many of them to serve any time in custody in their home countries.

The change will not apply to those convicted of murder, terrorism, rape, child sexual offences, grooming and manslaughter. They will continue to be imprisoned and serve the majority of their sentences in British jails.

At present foreign criminals have to spend at least a third of their sentences in a UK prison before they become eligible for deportation. Prisons are in danger of running out of room within months after Andy Burnham's decision to exclude 1,400 prisoners from the early release scheme. Campaigners say the plans to deport foreign criminals straight after their trials will deprive victims of real justice because they will be free in their home countries.

Hetti Barkworth-Nanton, chair of the domestic abuse charity Refuge, said: "Victims need justice and offender sentencing to restore a sense of safety, moral balance and personal experience control after a traumatic violation.

"If an offender is sent back to another country where they don't then serve that sentence, not only does it mean these critical aspects are lost, but it's not unusual for victims to also get anxious about the risk that offender represents to people in their own country."

Alex Norris, the justice secretary, said he had "wrestled" with the decision and accepted that some would criticise the principle of it but insisted that being deported from the UK and barred from returning was "a significant punishment and sanction in itself".

However, Martin Jones, chief inspector of probation for England and Wales, questioned whether deporting someone immediately after being sentenced was an "adequate punishment" for serious offences.

He told The Times: "I've always been anxious about that because if someone commits a serious offence to which a British court imposes a long custodial sentence and then gets on a plane to their home country, that will be quite difficult for the public and the victim to understand."

As of June there were 10,134 foreign criminals behind bars, accounting for 12 per cent of the prison population in England and Wales. About a third are on remand and therefore would not be eligible for deportation.

Burnham's 'politics done differently'

Manchester-based cash-and-carry, was unfortunate but very much on brand.

He will, he said, be taking the opportunity of a meeting with Macron, "to celebrate a co-operation that has helped us reduce small boat crossings to a seven-year low." This is indeed welcome news, but one does have to wonder whether there might be more appropriate places to celebrate a crackdown on small boats arriving from France than in front of the Bayeux Tapestry. Has the prime minister not seen it?

It didn't take very long at all for the point-scoring to begin in earnest. Within two questions and two answers, Burnham was very much on to Starmer's specialist subject of Liz Truss and the mini-budget. This was always Starmer's most reliable point scorer, his Philippoussis serve. In the end, what cost him is that he didn't have a single other shot to play.

"At the weekend, she removed a shadow chancellor who said that the Truss mini-budget was a mistake, and she replaced that shadow chancellor with one that helped to write the Truss mini-budget," Burnham told her. There were audible groans. Kemi Badenoch even reminded him of his promise to do politics differently. It is also a shot she has faced so many times before, and she knows how to handle it. "The problem with the mini-budget was that spending was announced before the money to pay for it, which is exactly what he is doing now," she said.

She said it just as gilt yields had risen to an 18-year high, the cost of government borrowing now being higher than during the peak of the Truss weeks, in the wake of significant spending commitments made by the prime minister, but no clear guidance on where the money would come from to pay for them. At one point, Burnham claimed he could fund his recent cuts to VAT on energy bills and business rates for pubs by scrapping digital ID.

"The former prime minister's chief secretary to the treasury has said there was no money allocated to digital ID," Badenoch told him. "You can't cut something that doesn't exist."

Where politics was done differently is that it was, from start to finish, entirely bearable to watch. Burnham and Badenoch are articulate speakers, with pleasingly profound ideological and economic disagreements over the best direction for the country. There would appear to be, in the House of Commons, for the first time in a long time, a re-emergence of actual politics worthy of the name. Until, that is, you remember that neither are in competition with one another, and both with Nigel Farage, who sat in stony-faced silence throughout. His time will come, before long, but his moment might have passed.

The final question came from Samantha Niblett, she of "summer of sex" and dildos in parliament fame, who asked the prime minister if she'd like to meet with him to "discuss my campaign". Sadly it has become very hard in Westminster to see or hear of Niblett without laughing, and members were slightly too slow to stop when she pivoted her question rather suddenly on to gynaecological cancer.

Burnham agreed to the meeting. "It's very clear that her summer was more exciting than mine," he said. He didn't quite look like he meant it. The prime minister is having the time of his life. Enjoy it while it lasts.

Harman rebuked for 'woke' pregnant minister claim

Aubrey Allegretti
Chief Political Correspondent

Harriet Harman has been criticised over her "outrageous" claim that a Conservative frontbencher was promoted because she was pregnant.

Claire Coutinho said she was not defined by her "maternity status" after commentary over her elevation in Kemi Badenoch's shadow cabinet reshuffle. Previously shadow energy secretary, Coutinho was given the business brief and made "number two" in the Tories' economy team.

Harman, who was Sir Keir Starmer's adviser on women and girls and previously an acting leader of the Labour Party, praised Badenoch for promoting several women, including Coutinho.

"Woke is as woke does," Harman said on *Electoral Dysfunction*, a Sky News podcast. "You've done it, Kemi. Claire Coutinho took Andrew Griffith's job as shadow business secretary. And actually, she was one of a number of women who was promoted by Kemi Badenoch and also is on maternity leave. I'm giving Kemi Badenoch a woke badge for that. That is a very progressive thing to do to give her a promotion. Honestly, I never thought I'd see the day."

Coutinho, who is more than seven months pregnant with her second son, called the comments "revealing". In response, Coutinho posted on X: "The left don't think a pregnant woman can be promoted on merit, only as a symbol of 'progressiveness.' I may be growing some feet and eyeballs, but my brain is just fine. Glad to be a Conservative because we don't define women by their maternity status."

Kevin Hollinrake, the Tory chairman, called Harman's comments "outrageous". He told Times Radio that "to think ... a pregnant woman can't be promoted on merit is complete nonsense". He added: "I'm afraid the left wing can never get away from the fact that to be promoted ... you've got to have some kind of social background that allows you to be promoted rather than promoting on merit. The Conservative Party will always promote on merit."

In June, Coutinho made political history by becoming the first party leader or stand-in to conduct prime minister's questions while pregnant, when she deputised for Badenoch.

UK DEFENCE OPERATIONS

Northern powerhouse **Servicemen survey the remote Arctic island of Jan Mayen from an RAF A400M Atlas transport aircraft that delivered personnel and supplies for Operation Atlantic City, a Nato exercise with Norwegian and US forces in the high north. The plane landed on a 1,585m runway that is little more than a dirt strip**

France sends extra police to tackle migrant mega-dinghies

Matt Dathan Home Affairs Editor

France has agreed to deploy a "surge team" of 45 police officers to beaches in Normandy to stop smugglers launching "mega-dinghies" ahead of President Macron's first meeting with Andy Burnham in London.

The prime minister said they will be deployed throughout this month to tackle the "evolving" tactics that have seen boats launched as far as 150 miles southwest of Calais.

Smugglers have responded to tougher law enforcement action in northern Europe by launching so-called "taxi boats" that motor up the coast picking up migrants waiting on beaches.

While the combined total number of boat crossings over the summer months has dropped to its lowest since 2019, the figures show that smugglers have started loading more people on to fewer, larger vessels. Last month a dinghy carrying a record 230 migrants crossed the Channel. The average number of migrants per dinghy is now 80 — nearly double what it was a couple of years ago.

Downing Street said France has committed to deploying the "surge team" to western beaches, which it said will triple the number of officers in the area. So far, the vast majority of French police dedicated to tackling small boats are around Calais.

The extra police will take the total number tasked with combating small boats to nearly 1,100 after questions over the commitment of the French police to tackle the problem. This includes 75 specialist officers from the Compagnie de Marche unit created as part of the UK-France deal in April and a 50-strong unit from the Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité who are trained in riot and crowd-control tactics and have the authority to enter the water to intercept boats. However, the vast majority are gendarmes, who do not have permission to enter the water.

A specialist French intelligence and judicial team seeking to root out and prosecute smuggling networks has also grown from 18 to 30 officers.

Ahead of the talks with Macron, Burnham said the two countries must "stay one step ahead" of the criminals' evolving tactics as he vowed not to be "complacent" after a fall in the number of small boat arrivals.

He said: "The small boats crisis is a shared European challenge, and no country can solve it alone. Working with France and our international partners, we will restore order and control to our borders and prevent smugglers exploiting vulnerable migrants."

Downing Street's emphasis on small boats ahead of today's meeting signals Burnham's determination to address the public's concerns over illegal immigration and asylum in the UK.

New polling by the More in Common think tank has found that concerns about public safety are driving opposition to local asylum accommodation, overtaking fears about the cost and pressure on public services.

When asked what the biggest concern is about housing asylum seekers, 30 per cent said public safety, while 27 per cent said the cost to the taxpayer.

Fears for women and girls' safety was the top reason that people oppose asylum accommodation in their area, 52 per cent cite this as a main reason.

Only a quarter of Britons think the government should close the border to those fleeing war or persecution but 64 per cent want capped and controlled routes for refugees.

Imminent Russia threat 'a fiction', says Diane Abbott

Herbie Russell, Geraldine Scott

President Putin raised the prospect of strikes on British military facilities as Diane Abbott described Russia's threat to the UK as a "Nato fiction".

Asked during a visit to Kyrgyzstan on Tuesday if defence industry sites in Britain could be targeted by Russia, Putin replied: "That's a secret; classified military information."

Abbott posted on X yesterday: "The imminent threat from Russia is a Nato fiction to justify their complete capitulation to Trump's demands for more military spending. The increase should not go ahead."

Ukrainian officials described Abbott's comments as "unacceptable", while at least two Nato allies have raised the remarks with the British government, Politico reported.

"While there can be a legitimate debate over defence spending, there should be no debate over whether the Russian threat is real. Ukrainians are living with this every single day," one Ukrainian official said.

The Labour MP's comments come despite Moscow's increasingly aggressive rhetoric in response to the UK's continued support for Ukraine, including the use of British missiles for long-range strikes into Russian territory.

Andrei Fedorov, an influential Kremlin adviser, has threatened attacks on British factories after the UK handed Ukraine the blueprints to its Storm Shadow missiles.

At a briefing on August 27, Maria Zakharova, the chief spokeswoman for the Russian foreign ministry, said: "The response to Ukrainian strikes using British missiles on Russian territory may become [attacks on] any military sites and equipment of Britain in Ukraine, or beyond its borders."

Days earlier, the Kremlin withdrew its ambassador to the UK, saying that relations had "deteriorated to an unprecedentedly low level entirely on London's initiative".

This week, Germany accused Russia of having mounted a drone attack on Leipzig airport in an effort to blow up a Ukrainian transport aircraft.

Ben Obese-Jecty, the Tory MP for Huntingdon and a retired army officer, said that Abbott was "dangerously out of touch" and "wilfully playing the role of Putin's useful idiot".

A No 10 spokesperson said: "The UK stands in full solidarity with Germany following Russia's egregious and reckless attack in Leipzig. Our commitment to supporting Ukraine from Russia's illegal invasion is ironclad." Abbott was approached for comment.

Conflict of interest row as chair of government lab joins AI firm

Mark Sellman
Technology Correspondent

The chair of a government research lab has been accused of creating a conflict of interest by joining an AI company.

Matt Clifford, the chair of the Advanced Research and Invention Agency (Aria), has been appointed as a government lobbyist for Anthropic, which develops the Claude chatbot.

Clifford, 40, who was an unpaid AI adviser to Rishi Sunak and Sir Keir Starmer, will lead Anthropic's lobbying effort outside the United States.

As chair, Clifford sets Aria's strategic direction and has regular meetings with the relevant secretary of state. He is paid about £30,000 a year for one day a week and his term runs until 2030. Clifford is co-founder of Entrepreneurs First, which funds start-ups.

Dame Chi Onwurah, Labour chair of the science, innovation and technology committee, said Clifford's roles "create a clear conflict of interest".

Clifford would not have had to seek prior approval for his Anthropic job as his roles in Whitehall do not qualify under Civil Service Commission rules. Aria said that Clifford would recuse himself from any business in which a conflict could arise and Anthropic said he would also have "no involvement in or visibility of Aria's commercial discussions with Anthropic".

Clifford wrote the blueprint for Starmer's AI policy which argued for weaker copyright laws for AI firms.

Anthropic has been accused of breaching copyright by using pirated books to develop Claude. It has agreed to pay $1.5 billion to settle a lawsuit from authors.

Aria's mission is "to unlock scientific and technological breakthroughs that benefit everyone" through high-risk, high-reward research. It is funded by the government with £1.2 billion until 2029-30. The organisation is exempt from the Freedom of Information Act.

Clifford said: "The decisions that will shape AI's impact shouldn't be made by any one actor — it will take industry, governments and civil society working together. People everywhere want real agency over how this technology is built and used in their societies, and they should have it."

Onwurah said: "His intention to remain as chair of Aria, which invests taxpayer money in cutting-edge research — much of it AI-related or AI-enabled — creates a clear conflict of interest. The committee looks forward to the AI minister setting out robust safeguards ... to ensure confidence in Aria's independence."

Aria said: "Clifford will continue in his role as chair of Aria, supporting our mission ... his continued role has been formally reviewed by the Department for Business, Innovation, Science and Trade."

Anthropic said: "We hire people with expertise and who understand how government works because our work requires it ... Matt's remit is explicitly global; the UK is one of dozens of governments his team will engage."

Eton in detention over ‘new town’ plan

Will Humphries
Countryside Correspondent

An impression of the North Barnes Farm development, which has led to protests. The South Downs site is owned by Eton College. Angela Rayner, housing minister, below, has said there is a “default yes” for development near rail stations

Eton College has sparked anger by announcing plans to build a town on countryside bordering the South Downs National Park.

North Barnes Farm — modelled on the King’s developments in Dorset and Cornwall — would involve up to 3,000 houses built in phases over 25 years.

Eton, where Princes William and Harry were pupils and where Prince George will attend, speculatively bought the 450-acre greenbelt site several years ago. It lies beside the hamlet of East Chiltington, home to about 465 people, in East Sussex.

Locals argue that the development would “wipe out” the rural parish and effectively merge it with the village of Plumpton Green, which has a population of just over 2,000.

Eton has a £120 million UK property portfolio “structured with an emphasis on diversity across property types”, according to its accounts. It had a similar proposal for the East Sussex site in 2021 but was thwarted by local planners.

The school will be hoping their new plans chime with the government’s recently amended planning rules that make it easier for homes to be built near railway stations.

In a move to reduce dependency on cars, Angela Rayner, the housing secretary, said there is now a “default yes” for developments within “reasonable walking distance of well-connected stations”. The train station at Plumpton Green has commuter services reaching London Victoria in an hour.

Steve Needham, who leads the protest group Don’t Urbanise the Downs, said: “The greenfield site is much-used and loved by people from far and wide. It is productive farmland, crossed by footpaths, bridleways and narrow lanes lined by ancient hedgerows and trees supporting rare wildlife.

“This ill-considered scheme would bring millions of more car journeys each year, adding to road chaos in the surrounding area — which is already gridlocked at key junctions on a daily basis. The roads here aren’t built for it.”

He added: “Water resources are already depleted and subject to hosepipe bans; the system simply won’t cope.”

James MacCleary, the Liberal Democrat MP for Lewes, said: “Any development would urbanise a unique part of the South Downs. It’s a totally inappropriate site, completely lacking in the necessary infrastructure.”

Welbeck Land, the developers working alongside Eton, have said they will hold an eight-week public consultation. The first event will take place at Plumpton Racecourse this weekend.

A spokesman for Welbeck said they hoped to submit a planning application for the first phase by the end of the year. Alistair Watson, the chief executive of Welbeck Land, said the area needed more housing to help bring property prices down.

“Average house prices in Lewes are 9.4 times average local incomes, and rents went up over 6 per cent last year,” he said. “Concentrating new homes and infrastructure in a single location is the best way to meet the area’s needs and can deliver far more benefits than piecemeal development.”

He added: “Brownfield sites alone cannot meet local housing need.”

The North Barnes website says the development will be a “sustainable community with a central high street at its heart”. Land will be made available to build a new school, nursery and health centre, as well as a sports hub, pavilion and new parkland.

City and heritage body in skyscraper row

Herbie Russell

Historic England’s calls to protect views of the Tower of London would make skyscrapers in the City unviable, officials have warned.

The City of London Corporation is in disagreement with conservationists over its City Plan 2040, the guiding framework for future developments, which Historic England argues threatens its Unesco status.

Historic England, the government’s advisory body on heritage, wants buildings to “lean away” from the site, the City has demanded a “clearly defined vertical edge” for future developments.

The rival arguments have been made ahead of additional planning hearings requested by Matthew Pennycook, the housing minister, who stressed that the City’s plans must not imperil the site’s “unquestionable importance”.

The Tower of London, built by William the Conqueror after the Norman Invasion, has been on the world heritage list since 1988. Unesco said the structure had been “the gateway to the new Norman kingdom” and remains “the most complete example of an 11th century fortress palace remaining in Europe”. Its heritage status also relies on “visual dominance on the edge of the River Thames” and position away from the City, the organisation said.

The dispute revolves around what contours future skyscrapers in the Square Mile should be limited to.

In documents submitted to the planning inspectorate, Historic England has called for a “larger uninterrupted gap of clear sky” than proposed by the City. It has also demanded that developments “lean away”, to make the City “more deferential to the Tower”.

The City argued, in its submission, that Historic England’s proposals fail to strike a balance between economic growth and conservation. It said that it could result in a loss of between 350,000 and one million square feet of office space — the larger figure being if permitted heights are curtailed.

Historic England’s plans could result in a loss of up to 6,800 office-based jobs, equivalent to £1.2 billion gross value added per year, it added.

City officials have requested a “clearly defined vertical edge” for its buildings, arguing that this would make minimal difference to people’s views of the historical site.

The planning inspectorate, the executive agency presiding over the plan, is holding hearings on the matter this week. These will help to establish whether the City’s plan for new buildings at its eastern boundary or Historic England’s plan should proceed.

Athlete Kelly Holmes voted top female role model in poll

Hannah Crowe

Dame Kelly Holmes, the gold medal-winning Olympic athlete, has been voted Britain’s greatest female role model in a poll of adults and teens commissioned by British Gas.

Holmes, who won gold medals in the 800m and 1,500m at the 2004 Olympics in Athens, was appointed Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 2005.

The former soldier, who came out as gay in 2022, saying it meant that she “finally felt free”, was awarded the Freedom of the City of London in June this year for her contribution to society.

The England footballers Jill Scott and Alex Scott, the singer Adele, the Olympic athlete Jessica Ennis-Hill, the actress Emma Watson and the Princess of Wales also feature in the list.

However, the survey of 3,000 people revealed that one third of Britons think there are too few visible women in public life. Almost all adults in the survey said it was important for children to grow up seeing female role models and 90 per cent would like to see more women in positions of influence. Greater recognition for women in sport and medicine, and the importance of business and politics as platforms for role models, were also priorities.

Women make up 51 per cent of the British population, and while representation of women in business and politics has been steadily increasing over the years in the UK, it is not quite yet on the mark.

News

Hillsborough law 'could divert MI5 from terror'

Aubrey Allegretti
Chief Political Correspondent

The security services will be diverted from preventing future terror attacks to deal with the obligations under the duty of candour law, a former head of MI5 has warned.

Baroness Manningham-Buller was among peers who raised concerns about the strain on intelligence officers, who will face new obligations to comply with public inquiries.

She backed the principle of the law but stressed there were implications for how the security services operate.

"There are no extra resources to do this," Manningham-Buller said in a speech on Tuesday night to the House of Lords. "Front-line staff will be taken off current work to service these demands — to service, if you like, the past rather than preventing the future. That is a real concern to me."

The comments were echoed by former ministers during the first major stage of scrutiny in parliament's upper chamber of a bill designed to end cover-ups by public authorities.

Championed by families of those who died in the Hillsborough disaster, which saw 97 Liverpool fans unlawfully killed in 1989, the bill was backed by Sir Keir Starmer and was passed by MPs in his final week as prime minister.

Ministers spent months brokering compromise talks with campaigners and the security services, and there was a stand-off over the opt-outs available on national security grounds.

The Hillsborough tragedy led to calls for a duty of candour for authorities

It would place a duty of candour on public officials to comply with requests made in an inquiry.

The law was backed on Tuesday by Lord Beamish, the Labour chair of the Intelligence Select Committee (ISC), who said there were robust safeguards to protect sensitive information.

Peers spoke similarly in support of its objectives but raised concerns about the impact of increased demands on MI5, MI6 and GCHQ, during the second reading stage of the bill.

Manningham-Buller, the director general of MI5 from 2002 to 2007 and who previously had led the service's Irish counterterror work, was among them. She added that it was vital to protect "need to know" information — but the mechanisms designed to ensure this were "adequate".

Labour's Lord Rooker, who was a long-serving minister under Tony Blair, cautioned families of victims in future disasters would be failed "if we do not build in significant resources" to help the security services cope with the extra workload.

Rooker said Britain had become "a nation that scrimps along on the big issues", and that those running services should be honest about "cuts" needed as a result of increased responsibilities.

Labour's Lord Wills said that the cost of funding scores of lawyers on legal aid could "run into hundreds of millions of pounds and have to be found from departmental budgets".

However, government sources gave no indication that more funding would be made available to the security services specifically to fund the new requirements. They pointed to a rise in the budgets for MI5, MI6 and GCHQ, from £4.6 billion to £5.4 billion by 2028-29. The decision was taken as part of the spending review last year, three months before the bill's introduction.

A government spokesperson said: "We have taken the time to get this right — working with families and campaigners ... while also working with security services so that there is no risk to national security."

CRAIG MCDEAN/EE72

Great pins **Gigi Hadid, 31, models the Versace dress made famous by Elizabeth Hurley in 1994 in the autumn edition of fashion magazine 72, which is titled: "Made in the 90s"**

Representative Example	Duration of Agreement	Lead Airtime Allowance	Total Monthly Price During Promo	Total Monthly Price During Promo April 27	Total Monthly Price During Promo April 28
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‘Grass ceremonies’ honour the missing dead of Nepal

David Brown
Chief News Correspondent

Niranjan Poudyal crouched by a bubbling stream as he performed the last rites for his parents almost exactly a week after they were swept away in Nepal’s floods.

Since the bodies of his father, Basu, 58, and mother, Goma, 55, have not been recovered, they were represented by effigies made of sacred kusha grass.

The ritual to liberate their souls will become commonplace as the families of the 4,000 missing people accept they may never recover their remains after days of searching hospitals, rescue centres and mortuaries.

Bodies of more than 1,114 victims have been recovered, and mass burials of those not identified have been authorised by the government because mortuaries are overflowing.

The Foreign Office announced on Tuesday that 36 Britons are missing, including many on religious pilgrimages to the sacred Mount Kailash in Tibet.

The floods have killed at least 1,204 people in Nepal, with 4,216 still missing, the national disaster authority said yesterday.

Chinese state media, meanwhile, reported 21 people killed in Tibet and 541 people missing on Wednesday, taking the total toll from the August 26 disaster to 1,225 dead and 4,757 missing in total.

Shisir Khanal, the Nepali foreign minister, said he still hopes some of the missing could be alive. “Miracles do happen,” he said. “At this point, I do not want to completely give up hope.”

Poudyal and his two brothers accepted their parents’ fate yesterday at a site known as a Kriya Putri Bhawan in the north of Kathmandu. As the ritual progressed, clouds rolled down from the Himalayas, which loom over the site.

Their parents disappeared along with their home in a village of the Nuwakot district when a wall of water, ice and debris swept down the valley after the end of a glacier broke away.

The ceremony began with the Poudyal brothers having their beard and heads shaved, leaving just a tuft of hair at the crown.

They then took the grass effigies of their parents to the stream that runs alongside the site. The effigies were burnt on a step before the ashes were thrown into the water, which flows to the sacred River Ganga, also known as the Ganges.

The brothers will remain in rooms at the site for five days as part of the mourning ritual.

ROJAN SHRESTHA FOR THE TIMES

A grass effigy is prepared for cremation as Niranjan Poudyal, left, performs the last rites

Munkanda Rijal, the brothers’ cousin, said: “They have to accept the death of their parents and that their bodies may never be found.

“According to Hindu culture, their souls hang over them until the purification process is completed. People will not accept water and food from their hands until it is done.”

The family of Raj Kumar Shrestha, 30, performed the same ceremony on Tuesday after claiming that what they believed was his body had disappeared.

Shrestha, a driver, was travelling in the Nuwakot district when the flood struck.

His body was recovered that same day, photographed by the authorities and registered as “number 350”, his family say. They were told that Shrestha’s remains were transferred to the Tribhuvan University teaching hospital in Kathmandu, but the hospital denied ever receiving the body.

Shrestha’s relative, Jeeban Shrestha, told The Kathmandu Post: “Where did the body under registration number 350 go? Police in Nuwakot say they sent it, while the TU teaching hospital says it never arrived. So where has it disappeared?”

Trekker’s body found on mountain in Pakistan

Haroon Janjua

The body of a British-Irish trekker who went missing while descending a 4,000-metre mountain in northern Pakistan was recovered yesterday after a three-day search operation.

Alexander Harris disappeared on Saturday while returning from the summit of Musa Ka Musalla in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province with a fellow Briton, Alun Cledwyn.

The two became separated on the descent, with Harris, a keen hiker and trail runner originally from Birmingham who also held Irish citizenship, going ahead. The alarm was raised when Cledwyn returned to their accommodation and there was no sign of Harris.

Hundreds of police officers, rescuers and local volunteers scoured the area for three days before finding his body.

Alexander Harris had been living and working in Islamabad

The 30-year-old had been living in Islamabad and worked for Adam Smith International, a global advisory consultancy.

Sohail Qureshi, a spokesman for the Mansehra police department, said Harris’s body was found at Pracha Khatak, partway down the mountain. He added that fog and rain may have caused him to lose his way.

Ejaz Ali, a local resident who helped in the search, said: “The route was very difficult and the rainfall made things even more difficult for the search teams.”

Adam Smith International described Harris as a “much-loved member” of the team and that they were devastated by his death.

The firm added: “He cared deeply for Pakistan, its people, its nature, and learnt Urdu during his time there. We are deeply grateful to the hundreds of people who joined the search effort, including local residents, volunteers, police, rescue teams, forest department, members of Alex’s trail running community, and the government of Pakistan that supported the operation.”

Convicted killer: ‘It’s happened again’

A convicted killer has admitted fatally stabbing his friend in the neck over New Year’s Eve before handing himself into police and telling them: “It’s happened again.”

Daniel Levy, 48, yesterday pleaded guilty at the Old Bailey to murdering Abdul Kaleem Shaik, a 41-year-old Indian citizen, at his flat in Vauxhall, south London.

It can now be reported that Levy, who has schizophrenia, had previously been convicted of killing his grandmother by stabbing and setting her on fire in July 2000.

Levy had previously accepted the second killing but denied it was murder due to his mental health at the time. He changed his plea as his trial was about to be opened before a jury at the Old Bailey.

At a previous hearing, the prosecution said Levy had stabbed Shaik in the neck with a large knife at his flat some time on New Year’s Eve or early on New Year’s Day.

Police were alerted after Levy went to Bishopsgate police station, in east London, shortly after 8pm on January 1. He confessed that he had killed someone, telling officers: “It’s happened again.”

The comment was understood to reference the killing of his Russian-born grandmother Nurzida Galimozanova, 72, on July 25, 2000.

Abdul Kaleem Shaik, left, was killed by Daniel Levy, who has schizophrenia

Officers went to Levy’s flat in Vauxhall, south London, and found Shaik’s body on a makeshift bed with a stab wound and blood on his chest, neck and face. A bloody knife was recovered.

Levy was arrested and charged with Shaik’s murder the next day.

CCTV footage showed that only the defendant and victim had been at the flat on the evening of December 31.

On January 2, Levy told officers that he had known Shaik for years and allowed him to stay in his flat. He said Shaik had become “very depressed” and was not coping. As a result of Shaik’s deteriorating mental health, he said he needed to help him by killing him and securing his passage to heaven.

Judge Lynn Tayton remanded Levy into custody to be sentenced next Wednesday.

Just Stop Oil returns with protest at Westminster

Ali Mitib

Just Stop Oil brought Parliament Square to a standstill as it relaunched its campaign against new oil and gas licences 17 months after claiming victory and vowing to end disruptive protests.

About 30 activists sat or lay in the road yesterday in a protest timed to coincide with Andy Burnham’s first appearance at prime minister’s questions.

The prime minister, who has previously indicated that he was open to accelerating the use of oil and gas to help Britain transition to clean energy, told the Commons he was “deciding whether to have more oil and gas projects”.

Sir Keir Starmer’s policy had been to stop issuing new exploration licences in the North Sea, while honouring existing contracts.

Just Stop Oil, which came to prominence due to its disruptive stunts such as throwing soup on Van Gogh’s *Sunflowers* and blocking roads in central London, held its last protest on April 26 last year and claimed that the campaign had achieved its aims.

Yesterday buses were taken out of service and parked in the street, while police vans blocked the road as officers arrived and arrested some of the protesters shortly after midday.

Trish Fitzmaurice, a mother from Norfolk who was one of those arrested on the road, said: “Andy Burnham, we are crying out for leadership!”

The Metropolitan Police said officers at the scene had engaged “with a group of people, believed to be Just Stop Oil supporters” and removed some of them from the road.

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Bristol Cars revs up for a return

Laurence Sleator
Transport Correspondent

SAM FROST

It was a luxury car manufacturer that was said to be so exclusive it used to vet its potential customers to prevent the "wrong" type of buyer.

But with its high prices, single showroom, an aversion to publicity and production of just a small number of vehicles each year, Bristol Cars was eventually forced to close.

Now, 80 years since it was established and more than a decade since it first went into administration, the British carmaker is set to return.

The brand plans to produce five new supercars as a "first step" before it brings out new models for sale, including potentially an EV.

Customers will soon be able to purchase a new Bristol Fighter, a two-seat supercar with gull-wing doors, powered by an 8.0-litre V10 engine and with a top speed of 210mph.

The exact price will be available upon application but representatives said they expected it to be "a bit cheaper than a million". Almost every aspect of the car will be designed around the buyer's wishes.

Previous owners of Bristol Cars have included Bono, Liam Gallagher and Sir Richard Branson.

The company, which was founded in 1945 as a spin-off from the Bristol Aeroplane Company, is set to partner with a "leading" British manufacturer to produce their vehicles in the UK. The venture is privately funded and its backers are not being disclosed.

Paul King, the new owner of Bristol Cars, told The Times: "Bristol has always been known for its quality, its discretion, its luxury and its performance. There's a place in the market for Bristol Cars. So we decided it will be a good idea to purchase all the goodwill, the trademarks, intellectual property, the design rights, the drawings, and give Bristol a chance in 2026. Times have moved on drastically since the previous times they've come up for sale."

More cars will be produced on "limited edition runs" and more dealerships will be opened across the country, King said. Previously, its only sales showroom was on Kensington High Street in west London, which is now occupied by another business.

Although he hoped to retain the brand's exclusivity, King said the company would not apply the same strict policy as Tony Crook, the previous owner, who died in 2014. Crook was said to only sell cars to customers he personally liked and had been known to tell buyers to leave the showroom if they tried to negotiate a discount.

"I'm not really here to judge people. I want our cars judged. If somebody is willing to hand over a large amount of money then who am I to say no?" King said.

"Ultimately if you're Noel Gallagher and you want to buy a Bristol then welcome on board. Bristol deserves to have new blood into the brand, it deserves to be a car that younger generations aspire to have."

He added: "If you wanted to rock up to the Ritz to show everybody you had loads of money then you'd turn up in a Rolls-Royce; if you wanted to rock up to the Ritz and tell the right people you had even more money, you arrived in a Bristol."

Richard Hackett, the chairman of Bristol Cars, said: "Bristol has always been about doing things differently. It was never a mass-market manufacturer. It built exceptional cars in small numbers for people who appreciated their individuality, engineering and character."

Déjà vu all over again

We've been here before with Bristol (Will Dron writes). It is one of those niche British carmakers that collapses only to be revived with a new model that never enters production. See also TVR, Connaught, Jensen and more.

The Fighter was the last "proper" Bristol, manufactured from 2004 until 2011, but some reckon just 20 chassis were built before the company entered administration. In 2016 a two-seat roadster called the Bullet was unveiled, but none made it out of the factory.

This latest effort feels like déjà vu all over again. But, as an admirer of Bristols, I do hope those behind the revival prove me wrong.

The Bristol Fighter and the 1951 Bristol 401. Left, the actress Jean Simmons in her Bristol coupé in 1950

Self-drive Uber cabbies' vow of silence

Laurence Sleator
Transport Correspondent

Humans supervising the UK's first autonomous taxi service have been told not to talk to passengers as designers try to create a "pure" experience.

From today Uber customers in London can request to be matched on their journeys with a Wayve AI self-driving car that navigates the capital's roads on its own.

However, because self-driving firms are still waiting for regulatory permissions, the Uber-Wayve ride cannot yet operate fully autonomously and must have a human safety driver ready to take control if something goes wrong.

In a briefing to passengers at the start of the journey, the safety driver will tell them: "This is a Wayve vehicle. If you want to learn more about it there is a 'learn more' section on the Uber app. It will be driving itself. I won't be able to speak. I do need to monitor the vehicle. If you need any assistance or want me to drive manually just let me know."

Safety drivers, private hires trained and licensed by Transport for London, will be able to get out to help with luggage but users have to open the door themselves using the app. The drivers are advised not to offer recommendations for the city or make small talk.

"They are trained safety operators, not a tour guide," said Alex Kendall, chief executive at Wayve, a British start-up. "A lot of people who've never tried autonomy will have a range of emotions to begin with but as soon as they've tried to once it normalises very quickly."

The vehicles are expected to operate fully autonomously as part of a "phased" approach once full regulatory sign-off is obtained.

Sarfraz Maredia, head of autonomous mobility and delivery at Uber, added: "If you really want an experience where you are talking to a human and learning about the city and learning about them, you shouldn't request an autonomous vehicle.

"We've designed every part of the experience, especially on the Uber side, to work exactly as if it was fully driverless and the safety operator giving you a briefing at the outset that would otherwise be given to you on the tablet. Everything else is the same."

Steve McNamara, general secretary of the Licensed Taxi Drivers Association, said: "We've always thought cabs in London are like a confession box. People get in and tell you things they haven't told their best friends or their partner because they know they are never going to see you again. This is the dystopian future these people want to inflict on us, where you can't talk to anyone. What are they going to do if the driver talks? Sack him?"

Uber to axe 3,300 jobs, Business, page 35

Sadiq Khan 'scammed' in untaxed Nissan conviction

Seren Hughes

Lord Khan has claimed he has been a "victim of a scam" after he was convicted over an untaxed vehicle.

The mayor of London was found guilty by a magistrate last month of keeping an unlicensed vehicle, a 24-year-old blue Nissan Micra.

Khan was convicted in his absence at a private hearing of the Single Justice Procedure, a controversial fast-track court system for low-level criminal cases, and ordered to pay £350.84.

City Hall officials said the car did not belong to either Khan, 55, or Transport for London (TfL), of which Khan is chairman.

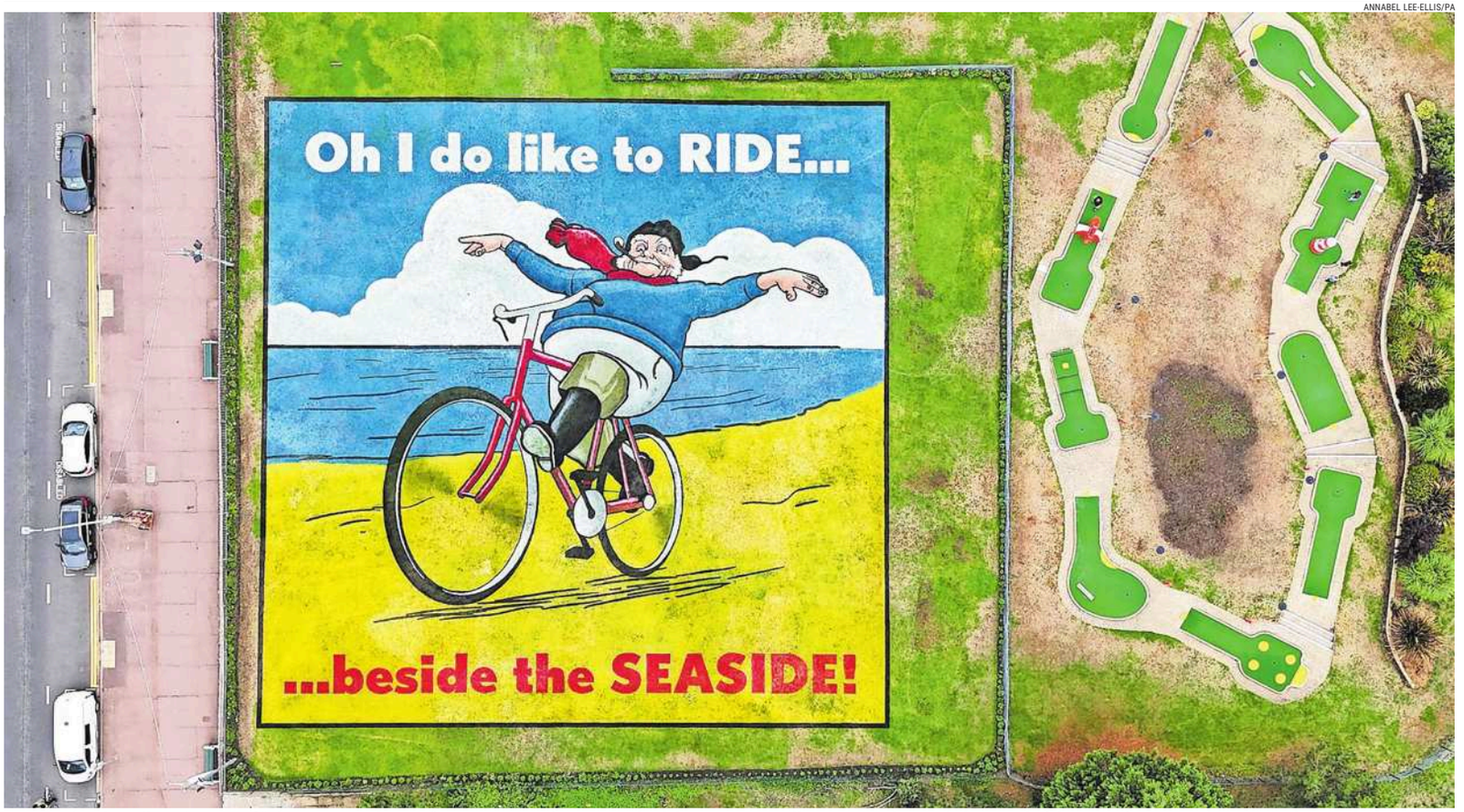
A spokesman for the mayor said: "It's not the first time the mayor has been victim of a scam involving people falsely stating that Sadiq is the owner of a vehicle. Such behaviour is illegal, and the DVLA are aware."

Court documents show that letters from the DVLA addressed to the mayor about the unpaid tax bill were sent to Gordon Ramsay's east London restaurant instead of the nearby TfL offices.

After the mayor expanded the Ultra Low Emission Zone (Ulez) to cover the whole of London, some protesters said they planned to register their cars in the mayor's name, supposedly to make him liable for the £12.50 daily charge.

DVLA officials said they were reviewing the case and investigating the circumstances of the prosecution. The Single Justice Procedure is under government review after a spate of incidents, including about 59,000 train fare evasion convictions being overturned.

ANNABEL LEE-ELLIS/PA



Breezy rider The Jolly Fisherman of "Skegness is so bracing" tourism poster fame got on his bike in an art installation created to mark the arrival of the Tour of Britain cycling race in the Lincolnshire resort

Most single men applying to be surrogate fathers are over 40

Sanchez Manning
Social Affairs Correspondent
Callum Martin

The majority of single men applying to be the legal fathers of surrogate babies are older than 40, data shows.

The Times previously revealed that between 2019, when single people were given the same surrogacy rights as couples, and last year, 170 men made solo parental order applications to the courts for children born via surrogacy.

Data released by the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) under freedom of information laws has disclosed that 83 of the applications were from men aged between 40 and 49. There were also 24 applications from men aged from 50 to 59. There were a small number of applications from single men in their sixties and seventies each year.

Separate data from Cafcass has shown that the number of gay male couples applying to be the legal parents of surrogate babies has risen by 191 per cent in the past decade from 70 in 2015 to 204 last year. Applications from heterosexual couples rose by 36 per cent, from 225 to 307 in the same period.

The upward trajectory is being largely driven by foreign surrogacy. Applications for babies born to non-UK surrogates have increased by 136 per cent, more than doubling in the past decade from 151 in 2015 to 357 last year. In contrast, parental order applications for children born from surrogacy arrangements based in the UK rose 23 per cent, from 113 in 2015 to 139 last year.

In England, between 2018 and 2024, there were more than 1,500 applications to become the legal parents of babies born to surrogate mothers abroad. The largest number, 642, related to babies born to surrogates in the US.

In July 2024 a case came to light that involved a 72-year-old man in Scotland who was granted permission to become the legal father of a three-year-old boy born to a surrogate in Oklahoma.

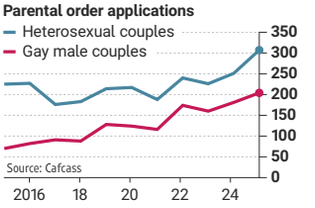
It is not against the law for Britons to engage in foreign surrogacy arrangements. However, campaigners have said the practice is ushering commercial surrogacy, which is illegal in the UK. They have also expressed concern about the rise in older single men having babies through surrogacy.

Lexi Ellingsworth, co-founder of Stop Surrogacy Now, a campaign group, told The Times: "Children are not a lifestyle purchase and pregnancy and labour is not a service. Strict safeguards, like that of adoption, should not be bypassed simply because an adult wants a child."

Helen Gibson, of Surrogacy Concern, another campaign group, said: "Men are effectively going abroad baby shopping, with total disregard for the baby's need for their mother and the woman who is being subjected to a higher-risk pregnancy and financial and physical exploitation."

However, the solicitor Louisa Ghevaert, a surrogacy law expert, said the rise in gay and single men becoming the legal parents of surrogate babies "reflects a more progressive and inclusive approach to surrogacy in the UK".

On the up



Urine test picks up 90% of bladder cancer cases

Eleanor Hayward

A simple urine test can detect nine in ten cases of bladder cancer, potentially speeding up diagnosis and sparing thousands from invasive tests.

A trial involving 964 NHS patients found the tool, called a Galeas bladder, could be used by doctors to decide which patients with symptoms needed further investigations.

The test, which analyses DNA from the patient's urine for traces of cancer, spotted 71 of 77 cancers in the group. It detected 100 per cent of the most aggressive type of the disease, muscle-invasive bladder cancer, and accurately ruled out cancer in 99.3 per cent of cases.

Currently, people who go to their GP with symptoms such as blood in their urine must be referred for a cystoscopy, which involves passing a tube with a camera through the urethra to look inside the bladder. More than 300,000 cystoscopies are performed every year in the UK and patients often wait weeks to have the procedure or get results.

The study, led by the University of Birmingham, concluded that giving people a urine test first would reduce the number of patients needing a cystoscopy by 73 per cent, helping to significantly reduce NHS waiting lists.

About 11,000 people each year are diagnosed with bladder cancer in the UK and the disease kills about 6,000 a year. Symptoms include blood in urine and pain while urinating.

Professor Richard Bryan, director of the university's bladder cancer research centre and a co-author of the study, said: "This shows molecular urine testing can be used now to help clinicians decide which patients need an urgent cystoscopy and which can safely have that procedure deferred ... Galeas is a promising and less invasive test that can be easier to administer and make testing for bladder cancer far easier."

The results were published in European Urology Oncology.

'Healthy fats boost prostate survival rate'

Eleanor Hayward Health Editor

Eating lots of healthy fats such as avocados and olive oil after a prostate cancer diagnosis could help survival rates, a study has found.

Researchers said if men who have had treatment for prostate cancer made "simple swaps" such as switching bacon on toast for avocado on toast, it could cut their risk of death by 20 per cent.

A team from the Harvard TH Chan School of public health analysed the diets of 5,000 men who had been diagnosed with non-metastatic prostate cancer. They were followed for 13 years on average and during this time, those who ate lots of healthy fats were significantly less likely to die of any cause including cancer and heart disease.

Deaths were 24 per cent higher in the group that ate lots of unhealthy fats such as bacon or chocolate, compared to those who ate mainly plant-based healthy fats.

The team found that replacing about 150 calories a day of saturated fat, such as one sausage, with 150 calories of monounsaturated fat, such as a handful of nuts or an avocado, was associated with a 20 per cent lower rate of death.

The reduced death risk was largely due to a lower risk of heart disease and other cancers, not by prostate cancer itself. The authors said: "Our findings suggest that diet after diagnosis may be one modifiable component of survivorship care, broadening the focus beyond control of the original tumour.

"Protecting cardiovascular and overall health is an essential part of prostate cancer care, particularly because some treatments can affect metabolic and cardiovascular health."

Atom test proves Einstein right on a quantum level

Kaya Burgess Science Correspondent

Galileo Galilei let cannonballs drop from the Leaning Tower of Pisa to demonstrate the effects of gravity, while Sir Isaac Newton supposedly saw an apple plummet from a tree. But what if the falling objects were billions of times smaller?

Scientists have dropped single atoms to test one of Albert Einstein's central theories about how gravity operates on a minuscule scale, showing for the first time how it affects a key property of tiny particles.

The experiment has been hailed as a milestone in century-long efforts to understand how gravity operates in the quantum world of atoms and subatomic particles. Researchers said it could be a step in building a bridge between two pillars of physics: the theory of general relativity and quantum theory.

An international team of scientists, including the Nobel laureate Sir Roger Penrose, has now "observed a long-predicted effect of gravity on a falling quantum object for the first time". The study, published in Science Advances, shows that "a fundamental principle at the heart of Einstein's theory of gravity remains consistent with the behaviour of matter in the quantum world", a statement from the University of Oxford explained.

Imagine standing in a lift on Earth; drop an object and it falls at 9.8 metres per second squared.

Transport that lift to deep space and accelerate it upwards at the same rate, and dropped objects fall to the floor in exactly the same way.

From within the lift, you cannot tell the difference between gravity and acceleration. This is Einstein's equivalence principle. Scientists have long predicted that it should have a particular effect on a tiny atomic scale but have struggled to test it.

In an experiment at Ben-Gurion University in Israel, researchers from the UK, Israel, Germany and the US took advantage of an unusual property of quantum particles: they can behave not only like solid objects but also like waves, with cyclical peaks and troughs.

Scientists took about 20,000 rubidium atoms cooled to a fraction above the coldest possible temperature of minus 273.15C — absolute zero — and sent each atom along a dual path.

They used magnetism to hold one path still against gravity while pushing the other upward into free-fall, like a ball thrown in the air falling back to Earth. The two paths for each atom were then guided back together.

The study found that the effect of free-falling shifted the "quantum phase" of one of the paths, leaving its peaks and troughs slightly out of sync with those of the other path.

When the two paths converged, the waves clashed like colliding ripples on a pond.

Newton ponders gravity under his apple tree, long before quantum tests

When observed across all 20,000 atoms, this created a pattern of interference that could be captured by a sensitive camera.

The findings match the prediction of how Einstein's equivalence principle would apply.

Professor Ron Folman of Ben-Gurion University, the study's lead author, said of the two theories of relativity and quantum mechanics: "These two pillars of modern physics have so far eluded all attempts at a unified theoretical framework, but this complex experiment gives more hints as to how such a unification may be achieved."

TMS

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Kemi wise on prized spies

Kemi Badenoch, it seems, has placed some moles right at the top of the circus, by which I mean the Labour Party. Asked on the *All Talk* podcast if she had any friends across the aisle, the Tory leader declined to name names saying: "I need my spies in there." In fact, a lot of Badenoch's leadership has the air of a spy novel, what with her having dealt with a large number of defectors. She is also keeping an eye on her own team. In the past, political counter-espionage was done by people like Gavin Williamson, who had eyes everywhere and intimidated MPs with his tarantula, but trying to find out MPs' secrets is a lot easier these days. "I don't need Gavin Williamson," Badenoch said. "I have WhatsApp."

An interesting quirk of Keir Starmer's resignation as an MP was that he did so by being appointed as Steward and Bailiff of the Three Hundreds of Chiltern. One of the Three Hundreds has an apposite name, and Starmer's appointment means he has ended up in charge of a place called Burnham. The appointment was made by the chancellor. Quite something for John Healey to have signed Starmer's political death warrant twice in one year.

THATCHER SPELT IT OUT

Our recent stories about Margaret Thatcher's unreliable sense of humour led to a message from Andrew Fraser, who used to work at Saatchi & Saatchi, the agency behind the Conservatives ads in the 1980s. He said that the guru Tim Bell once told him he had shown Thatcher a series of layouts riffing on their theme of "Labour isn't working". One poster had the slogan "Educashun isn't wurking", which Bell thought was clever but Thatcher said: "Tim, I know these are only layouts, but you must be sure to get the spelling right."

Andy Burnham seems to be more comfortable when he's not speaking from notes, but going off script leaves him vulnerable to amusing turns of phrase. He told one MP in the Commons that we need to look at "all possible solutions for water". One for chemists to conjure with.

GOD SQUAD

Is God a Gooner? While it seems certain he isn't a Spurs fan, the prospect of the Almighty being an Arsenal supporter has been raised by winger Noni Madueke, below. The new book *22 Years*, which charts the club's title win last season, says ten of the players have meetings where they pray and discuss the scriptures. "We believe it gives us such a massive boost when we go on to the pitch, that we're not alone," Madueke said. "On the pitch we have got each other, but we believe we have God fighting for us as well." The connection between religion and football is not new. The comedian Jasper Carrott once joked: "I hear Glenn Hoddle's found God. That must have been one hell of a pass."

In the weeks of doing publicity for his new book about a famous Roman general, the author Robert Harris has been playing a little private game with blissfully unaware journalists. Any one of his interviewers could have won "a small cash prize" if they made a particular joke about the book's title, but hack after hack missed the chance. The award has gone to the broadcaster Simon Mayo, who made the gag on his Books of the Year *podcast: "Is it a thriller? No, it's* Agrippa*."*

JACK BLACKBURN

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News

Danny Boyle turns tabloid history into a dizzying ride

Film Kevin Maher

Ink
Venice Film Festival
(116min)
★★★★☆

The Venice Film Festival has begun with a propulsive entry from Danny Boyle, an adaptation of James Graham's 2017 stage play about the early days of The Sun made with the kind of hyperkineticism that has come to define the work of the Oscar-winning director of *Trainspotting*. Flashbacks and flash forwards abound, archive headlines pulse through the dizzying frames and everywhere there is a sense that Graham's talky source material is being hammered into vibrant life by a filmmaker whose default setting is adrenaline overdose.

An early coup de cinema, set in October 1969, features 38-year-old Rupert Murdoch (Guy Pearce), the new owner of the tabloid, together with editor Larry Lamb (Jack O'Connell), kneeling down in Fleet Street and feeling the vibrations of the printing presses running beneath them. The scene is shot through with sternum-rattling sound, while the image almost shudders free from the sprockets, as if both men are about to be shaken to the core.

What follows is a heady ride through the relaunched paper's first tumultuous year, as seen through the complementary yet competing visions of Lamb and Murdoch. Both are instinctive disruptors, and this Murdoch consistently rails against an entitled British establishment built upon, he says, "class-riven bullshit from a hypocritical elite".

But Lamb's obsession with transforming The Sun into a tabloid behemoth is darker and more corrosive, and will eventually encompass the paper's coverage of the kidnapping and murder of Muriel McKay (Lucy Russell), wife of Murdoch's deputy Alick McKay (Jonathan Hyde), as well as Lamb's decision, late into the drama, to introduce nude models on page 3. After the first topless issue hits the stands Murdoch stampedes through the office, roaring at Lamb: "What the f*** have you done?"

The performances are uniformly strong, with O'Connell suitably tortured as Lamb and Claire Foy fabulously steely as the (fictionalised) women's editor Jules Davies.

Pearce's Murdoch is a wealth of contradictions, a man still at war with the establishment even as he becomes a kingmaker; a key scene features a cameo from Margaret Thatcher, realised with ropey CGI, like Princess Leia in *Star Wars*.

In 2017 Graham worried his even-handed play may be seen as "toothless" by those expecting a more trenchant analysis. Boyle, perhaps aiming to supply those teeth, closes his film with a visceral montage that suggests everything from Andrew Tate to tech bros and the death of truth can be laid at the door of The Sun. It's disingenuous and self-defeating.

In cinemas later this year

ANTHONY DICKENSON/NETFLIX

Rupert Murdoch (Guy Pearce), left, clashes with Larry Lamb (Jack O'Connell); Clare Foy, left, at the premiere, plays Jules Davies

Shard tenants hit with rules and charges

Seren Hughes

From £4,095 per month the residents of Shard Place can enjoy a heated 18-metre pool on the rooftop with views over the Thames to St Paul's Cathedral, a plush cinema and on-site gym facilities.

Living in the 27-storey building opposite the Shard in London is billed as experiencing "the very best of life in the capital — without compromise".

But residents have complained about the rules, from restrictions on guest stays to limited cinema slots per month and charges for an induction to the gym, the Financial Times reported.

Shard Place offers 176 apartments to rent fully furnished, managed by the Qatari state-owned Real Estate Management (UK). Developed by the team behind the Shard, the block is said to combine "the convenience and luxury of a boutique hotel with the relaxed independence of a place to call home".

Many residents in the block opposite the landmark are said to be unhappy

Its doors opened to tenants in June last year, five years late and more than £200 million over budget, according to accounts published by St Thomas Street Development, which is controlled by Qatar Central Bank.

Apartments range from £4,095 per month for the smallest available one-bed flat to more than £9,000 for a three-bed. The average monthly rent for a one-bed in Southwark is £1,843.

Residents have then been confronted with hidden costs. Tenants were reportedly told in March that they would be charged £60 a month for internet use, without the option to choose their own wifi provider or price.

There is also said to be a one-time fee of £50 to use the gym. One resident, who moved from Nottingham but is planning to leave next month, said she had not been told about the fee before signing her lease.

"Why would I pay to use my residential gym? It just did not make sense to me," she told the FT. She was also surprised to find out residents were only allowed a certain number of cinema slots each month.

The pool had to be booked and residents said it was often unavailable. Guests are also not allowed to use it, which she said was "ridiculous".

The building's website boasts that a 24/7 concierge is available to "accept deliveries on your behalf", but food delivery drivers have allegedly been prevented from leaving items with the service. Shard Place has also been strict on guests, limiting their stays to 14 days in a 90-day period without permission from management.

Some residents, however, told The Times that they enjoyed living at Shard Place and had no concerns.

A spokesperson for Shard Place said: "Shard Place is one of London's most desirable addresses, with the majority of our residents choosing to stay with us for the long term. We will always put the safety, security and comfort of our residents first, and we actively welcome feedback."

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Teacher 'had sex with boy she told to call her Miss'

Will Humphries
Southwest Correspondent

A female PE teacher had sex with a 16-year-old pupil while watching Wimbledon and asked him to call her "Miss" when they were alone, a court heard.

Bronwen James, 30, became "flirtatious" with the teenage pupil and invited him to her home for sex up to four times, a jury was told.

In a video interview with police, the student said they were alone watching Wimbledon in her home when they first had sex together.

James, who taught at a mixed secondary school in Southampton, allegedly organised meetings with the pupil on Snapchat and picked him up so they could kiss in the car as part of their "sexually charged relationship".

The court also heard that she told

him that she "loved him" and "wanted to move away" with him.

Edward Culver, for the prosecution, said James named the boy "Number 8" in her phone contacts as a "cover", suggesting he was "the eighth man or boy she had slept with".

James was teaching PE at Bitterne Park School at the time of the alleged offences.

The boy, who cannot be named for legal reasons, told the court that he was "groomed" by James, but at the time he thought it was "great".

Culver told the court that James would allow students to use their phones during lessons, and that the boy sought to add her on Snapchat.

"She initially refused his attempts to add her on Snapchat but then chose to do so," he said.

"They started to message each other. The messages became flirtatious. The two met up and went to Weston Shore. They kissed in the car.

"Later, the prosecution say, James picked up [the boy] and took him to her house."

In a video interview with police, the boy said they progressed to having sex at her house, adding: "At the time I was overwhelmed, it was great, but looking back at it, it was wrong."

Describing the first time they had sex in her home, he said: "She was coming to me on the sofa, head in my lap, watching TV, her dog was there as well, just relaxing, then I leaned in for a kiss.

"We were kissing, then things progressed, I said: 'Shall we go upstairs?' She said 'yes' and we had sex. She got naked and I got naked and that's how it went."

The boy said James would slip him vapes in his coursework in class and she liked him to call her "Miss" when they were alone together.

"She is a bit weird but I rolled with it, it was a little bit dodge but I didn't care," he said.

He also described how James had called him on the phone from her leavers' party with other teachers in the background and told him she loved him.

"I thought she cared about me," he said.

James, from Chippenham, Wiltshire, denies four counts of sexual activity with a child by a person in a position of trust. Culver said James and the teenager did not use protection when they had sex.

He said the school became aware of the relationship "through a student showing a teacher some text messages" between James and the boy.

"They suggested a sexually charged relationship," he said. "Her photo was visible on the phone screen."

When James was interviewed by police under caution about the allegations, she did not answer any questions and instead provided a prepared statement through her solicitor.

She said the student had never been to her house and she had never had a sexual relationship with him. James also said she had received communication from an unknown number, which turned out to be him, and suggested he was "being put up" by another student to make the allegations.

The trial continues.

Bronwen James, who taught PE in Southampton, is alleged to have slept with the teenage pupil after they had watched Wimbledon on the TV at her home

One in ten young teens receive lewd posts online

More than one in ten children aged 13 to 15 are likely to have received at least one sexual message online in the past year, a survey suggests.

While most messages came from children of their own age, around a fifth said they had come from adults. The figure is even higher among girls who had received sexual messages, a quarter of whom said the content had been sent by someone aged 18 and over.

The findings are part of the first release of data from a new crime survey of children by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

More than 6,000 responses were collected as part of a study of perceptions of crime and online safety among ten to 15-year-olds in England and Wales in the year to February. Questions on the sending and receiving of sexual messages and exposure to harmful content online, were asked only of children aged over 13.

A quarter of girls who received sexual messages said they came from someone aged 18 or over (25 per cent) — much higher than the equivalent figure for boys (12 per cent). The most common format was comments or texts (84 per cent), followed by photos (51 per cent) and videos (26 per cent). Some 25 per cent said they had received more than ten such messages in the past year.

It was the first time the ONS had run a survey of this kind online.

Caroline Youell, from its centre of crime and justice, said: "Completing responses independently, without an interviewer or parent sitting alongside them, helps children feel more comfortable sharing honest reflections on their experiences and perceptions.

"The survey has been designed to work well across a range of devices, including smartphones, making it easy for children to take part wherever they are.

"The results speak for themselves: with nearly four times as many responses from the new survey, this is a marked improvement that gives policymakers a far more reliable evidence base for decisions that affect children."

Nearly half (48 per cent) said they had seen a lot or a fair amount of hate online targeted at people with certain characteristics. One in five boys said they had searched for sexual content online, compared with one in ten girls.

PM pledges to rescue Jodrell Bank

Kaya Burgess Science Correspondent

The prime minister has promised to try to save Jodrell Bank observatory from closure, declaring there was "no way we can see its demise".

Andy Burnham recalled his own school trips to the site, which is dominated by the Lovell Telescope, the instantly recognisable dish that has scanned the heavens since 1957.

In July, UK Research and Innovation said the site in Cheshire would not be a priority for further funding after March 2028, raising fears that it could cease operations.

Sarah Russell, the MP for Congleton, told Burnham in parliament that Jodrell Bank was "facing a significant problem in the medium term because of funding cuts".

The prime minister responded: "Every one of my generation went on a school trip to Jodrell Bank, and there is no way that we can see its demise, and it won't happen under my government. I know there are changes that have been made in relation to research funding, but Jodrell Bank is a heritage asset for the country, as well as a research asset."

Russell asked that Burnham and No 10 North meet her and Tim Roca, the MP for Macclesfield, to which the prime minister agreed, saying: "There must be a way to save Jodrell Bank, and I give a commitment today, at this dispatch box, we will find it."

More than 150 well-known figures, including the astronaut Tim Peake and Sir Brian May, the Queen guitarist and astrophysicist, signed a letter calling on the government to "find funding immediately to save Jodrell Bank".

Scientific observations at the site are expected to cease in April 2028 without a new funding deal. The Lovell Telescope is 76.2 metres in diameter and forms part of the e-Merlin network of telescopes around Britain, operated by the University of Manchester.

Britain risks losing its cutting-edge ability to track hostile satellites with precision if the government allows the Lovell to cease operating, international scientists have warned.

By pairing US radar transmitters with Jodrell Bank's highly sensitive receivers, an international team has tracked objects far smaller than those detectable by the radar alone, allowing them to track objects as small as a football in orbit 22,000 miles above Earth.

Tony Beasley, the director of the US National Radio Astronomy Observatory, said in July: "If Britain wants a sovereign capability to understand what is happening in space, this is infrastructure it already has. In terms of telescopes that British scientific and military organisations have access to, this is yours, and it is a remarkable facility."

Plastic surgeons inundated with requests for 'AI face'

Hannah Crowe

Patients are asking plastic surgeons to mirror photos of their faces that have been enhanced by artificial intelligence in efforts to get the perfect "AI face".

The British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons (Baaps) said this was true for 15 per cent of its members in a survey. It said that AI-generated images distorted the reality of what cosmetic surgery could achieve, a problem long suffered by surgeons.

It takes Chat GPT seconds to remove a dorsal hump or pull up a brow but hours for a cosmetic surgeon, who has to account for a patient's anatomy, including bone structure and skin quality.

Baaps has called the phenomenon "AI face", cautioning that patients should not believe that they will receive the same result through surgery. One concern is that using AI will contribute to a "homogenised aesthetic", where digitally perfected features become a benchmark for beauty.

In 2015, when *Keeping up with the Kardashians* dominated reality TV, surgeons were inundated with requests from patients wanting to look like Kim Kardashian. The craze came to the UK, where Sonia Ali, an influencer, gained notoriety for her resemblance to Kardashian.

Nora Nugent, president of Baaps, said: "Once a patient has seen an AI-generated image of themselves, that image can become their reference point. It can be very difficult to explain that surgery cannot simply reproduce every change that an algorithm has made to a photograph."

News

Vicars becoming an 'endangered species' amid recruiting crisis

Kaya Burgess
Religious Affairs Correspondent

Vicars are becoming an "endangered species", the Church of England has been warned, amid a recruitment and retention crisis that is "leaving the nation's poorest communities without regular priestly care".

A report compiled by a campaign group called Save the Parish has highlighted a "crisis in clergy numbers".

It has led the Church of England to struggle to meet its legal duty to provide for the "cure of souls" — the offer of pastoral care and rites such as weddings and funerals to every person in a parish regardless of their faith — in every part of the country, the report warned.

The document, to be revealed today at an event in the House of Lords, notes that most active priests are those serving after retirement.

It also warns that the number of priests resigning from paid posts — known as stipendiary roles — is greater than the number retiring. Figures showed 379 resignations against 278 retirements in the most recent year.

The number of people coming forward to train for the priesthood hit a peak of 591 in 2020, but fell to a low of 370 in 2024. There was only a slight recovery to 417 last year.

Vicars would once have been a core part of every community and a visible daily presence around their villages and neighbourhoods, but now priests are given "multiple churches to care for" across wide areas as parishes get grouped together to cut costs and congregations shrink, the report said.

This has led to the "demoralisation" of priests, it found, warning: "They feel undervalued, under-resourced, overworked, frustrated and vulnerable."

The Church is struggling to attract young people to join the priesthood, and those who do come forward appear to have "little understanding of the Anglican church and its traditions", the report noted, adding: "This is partially a consequence of no longer living within a culture saturated with Christianity."

"The British vicar is becoming an endangered species, leaving the nation's poorest communities without regular priestly care," Save the Parish warned.

The report says that the Church of England's claim to provide "a Christian presence in every community" will have "no meaning" if it cannot attract and retain more priests, who are currently "drowning under burdens of administration".

It recommends that the mandatory retirement age of 70 be scrapped, that funding be increased for ordination training, and that a priest's success should be measured not by the number of worshippers in their pews, but by the "numbers of lives touched, funeral by funeral, cup of tea by cup of tea".

The Rev Marcus Walker, rector of Great St Bartholomew in London, said: "If clergy are loving their job, they will be the greatest recruitment sergeant for new priests the Church has ever known."

The Bishop of Chester, the Right Rev Mark Tanner, chairman of the Church of England's Ministry Development Board, said the number of people starting training rose last year "after four years of decline", but said the church "wants more people to explore a vocation to serve God and the Church".

He said the Church was "acutely aware of the needs of our clergy and of their well-being" and had taken action to "improve stipends, pension arrangements, housing on retirement and support for ordinands and curates" with backing from the General Synod.

The former Top Gear star bought the manor house near Abergavenny after divorcing his wife of 23 years, Mindy, below

Bats leave Hammond's grand design in slow lane

When Richard Hammond spent £2 million on a Georgian manor house in Monmouthshire, he came with a renovation in mind (David Brown writes).

His collection of 30 cars, including a 1969 Ford Mustang and three Porsche 911s, would be housed in a heritage-style showroom. He would also build a library and a glazed link leading to a memorabilia gallery.

But the former *Top Gear* host may have to wait before upgrading the mansion. A survey has found eight species of bats use the 21-acre estate to hunt and roost. He may have to install roosting spaces, including bat boxes, and incorporate specially designed voids into the renovated buildings, according to the survey.

The findings will no doubt frustrate the car enthusiast, 56, who in a video of his vehicles being delivered in June said: "I moved house recently. These cars have never lived here and they're home. My babies are back. I'm childish, but I'm excited."

He bought the home for £1.99 million after announcing his divorce from his wife, Mindy, after 23 years of marriage, last year.

Videos on Monmouthshire council's website, taken by the bat surveyor, show two species of bats flying out of an old stone barn, which the presenter wants to convert into a bar and sitting area.

The survey warned that, without mitigation, the work could cause the loss or disturbance to the roosts. It is an offence to disturb, injure or kill bats, as well as damage their roosts or habitats.

The presenter's planning agents said: "The scheme has been developed through a heritage-led design process that responds positively to the significance of [the property]."

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Comment

Britain gives the US a glimpse of its future

Dollar's prestige has protected America from debt tremors but this staple of UK politics is starting to shake Washington

Juliet Samuel

@CITYSAMUEL

Paul Krugman says not to panic. But another very clever American economist at Stanford says that if you're not going to panic, you should at least "reflect" upon the "very bad news" being delivered by bond markets. And once you have reflected, you can proceed — *calmly* — to convert your assets into gold bars, tinned goods and guns.

This side of the pond we're quite used to putting on slavish panics about bond markets, although now we have Andy Burnham in charge there'll be no more of that because he refuses to be "in hock" to them and he has "a theory of growth" and it's that we need to revive Theresa May's "local industrial strategies". If that doesn't reassure you, you may wish to know that ham hock is John Healey's favourite pub snack, so we're in good hands.

Bond markets are doing their best to bring on a fresh fainting fit. Britain's long-term borrowing costs have soared to levels not seen since the Good Friday agreement — which is considerably above rates reached after the "mini-budget".

This is good news for the Tories, not only because their new shadow chancellor was a Treasury minister for the wet lettuce debacle, but because, despite that, they are the only party that obviously stands to gain from debt tremors. Burnham's tremulous performance during his first prime minister's questions rather brought home the point.

Labour can take some comfort from the fact that the bond massacre really is global. Borrowing costs shot up for the United States and Japan, although, as usual, British bonds suffered most. But the really interesting dynamic this time concerns the Americans.

Something creepy is happening to US government bonds, or "treasuries" as they're known. Twice in the past month Scott Bessent, the Treasury secretary, has intervened in markets to prop up demand, something that has never happened in this way before. And what is becoming increasingly apparent with each round of debt trembles is that the markets are behaving differently. They are no longer treating US treasuries as special.

This might not sound especially creepy to a normal person — but trust me, in financial markets it's practically a revolution. The special status of the dollar and US debt is a

> Someone needed to lend whenever the US wanted to borrow

foundational dogma of modern markets. It's what allows America to binge like an ant colony in a cereal box. It's the weapon with which American sanctions browbeat the world. It's the engine oil of trade, the mega-currency through which lesser currencies exchange, the financial benchmark used to measure all the others, the failsafe collateral and the first and last store of paper wealth. And it's been this way ever since the US allowed the world to start trading its debt freely after the Second World War.

The market assumption underlying US treasuries is that they represent the world's "risk-free rate": the rate at which a free market will lend to the world's safest, strongest borrower, which will never default. Other risks still abound — inflation, exchange rates, price moves and so on. But the working assumption about treasuries is that the owner gets paid what the bond says on it, in full.

Over time, this assumption has been hard-wired into the system. Everything from American mortgages to the debts of developing countries is priced off treasuries. Central banks use them as a cornerstone of their reserves. Post-2008 regulations force banks to hold stocks of them. Large companies park cash in them. Only a handful of other countries (Germany, Switzerland, Japan) sell bonds that serve a fraction of these purposes and none of them are as big and important as the US. In effect, this means that someone, somewhere always needs to lend when the US wants to borrow.

Except it's starting to look as if that may no longer be true. The Stanford economist Hanno Lustig says markets aren't pricing treasuries as "risk-free" any more. He says US borrowing rates are now going up like other countries' rates "because investors don't think of treasuries as safe". Krugman calls this panicky talk. The reason the US has to pay more, he claims, is because American companies are borrowing such vast amounts to build data centres that investors can't keep up. The tech companies have blown through hundreds of billions they were hoarding in cash and now they have to borrow to build, competing with their own government for lending on a vast scale. This is no crisis of confidence, Krugman says, merely supply and demand.

But Lustig's deeper analysis of prices suggests Krugman is wrong.

CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES

Scott Bessent's interventions in the bond market were highly unusual

Once you strip out confounding factors, the US is quite simply looking less special. Its gas prices are finally succumbing to Hormuz-driven inflation. Its central bank, like ours, cannot simply buy its debt any more without stoking inflation. Its tariffs and sanctions and wars have given foreign central banks pause, so they're no longer the default buyer of more treasuries. And its borrowing is on an absolutely wild trajectory.

The US government deficit is running at 6 per cent, adding an incredible $2 trillion a year to its $40 trillion in debt. The schemes President Trump came up with to plug it — tariffs, Elon Musk's spending cuts, plans to sell non-dom status for a million dollars — have come to little. And his tax cuts have added to borrowing. The upshot is that the US now has to refinance several trillion in debt every three months. This is less a case of being in hock to bond markets and more like making yourself their willing gimp.

The likelihood is still that the US pays its debts on paper and embraces inflation to shave down their value. And in the long run, there are potentially major benefits to eroding the dollar's special status, like making American exports cheaper. But the costs are vast. The world will bear

> Fiscal funny-land is a merrier place than the realm of rectitude

them in more expensive trading and instability born of fear about its stores of wealth. But it is Americans who will have to face up to the fiscal reckoning. Inflation is already painful. The right will at some point have to reckon with limits to tax cuts and defence spending, the left with constraints on social security.

As any British politician could tell you, this isn't fun. Fiscal funny-land is a much merrier place than the realm of fiscal rectitude and even now, America doesn't look very merry. If they want a preview of how it looks having to pretend to care about borrowing, they should send a delegation over here. We might not have any missiles or new roads or data centres, but we've got a man from Manchester and if those bond markets don't behave, he's going to play his guitar at them. Voilà.

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Comment

Cyclists must mind manners, and the blind

Floating bus stops, heavy e-bikes and reckless riders endanger all pedestrians, sighted or not

Edward Lucas

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It's bad enough being blind. It's even worse being invisible. But that is how people with sight loss feel about the way our streets and public transport are planned.

The current furore involves "floating" bus stops, introduced in 2013 in London, as well as in Manchester, Leeds and elsewhere. The idea is that cyclists should not have to veer right, into the traffic, when they pass a stationary bus. Instead, a cycle lane keeps left of the bus stop, running between it and the main pavement. A short pedestrian crossing, marked with black and white stripes (but no Belisha beacons) marks a safe route across the cycle lane for the bus passengers.

Fine in theory. But it assumes that cyclists will stop at these crossings (now numbering 192 in London). Far too many don't. A now-viral video recorded by the National Federation of the Blind of the UK shows cyclists barrelling past a floating bus stop in central London. It is sickening to watch. Pedestrians (not only blind — also old, frail or just timid) wait nervously and cross hurriedly. Most make it; some are sent flying.

A plot twist in this horrid thriller is that some cyclists who do stop get hit from behind by their heedless fellow travellers.

I see all sides in this. I started cycling as a schoolboy in the early 1970s and have never stopped. I rejoice at the freedom and fitness it brings. I am delighted that cycle lanes have mushroomed, meaning I spend less time weaving between tonnes of fast-moving metal. And I applaud the new dockless e-bike schemes that herald a revolution in mobility for those who can't huff and puff up hills.

I am also an occasional car driver. Whether on four wheels, on two or as a pedestrian, I fume at inconsiderate, unpredictable cyclists. But at least I can see them. My two blind cousins cannot. After decades in which life became steadily better for our 340,000 registered blind people (voice recognition and text-to-speech software being among the big changes), we are now going backwards, at least when moving around big cities is concerned.

> Too often, it feels safer — and less humiliating — to stay at home

Blind people (and the million-plus who are partially sighted) are used to dealing with rule-governed, audibly signalled systems. They can navigate bus and train networks and find safe road crossings. But anarchic use of the pavement by silent, speedy, often heavy vehicles is a new and growing danger. As floating bus stops were introduced, blind people's worries were ignored "as if we don't exist", says Erik Matthies, policy lead on this issue at the Royal National Institute of Blind People. At bus stops, my cousin Kate must ask out loud for fellow passengers' advice. It's disempowering, she says. "You go down a notch." Too often it feels safer, and less humiliating, to stay at home. We impose, in effect, a custodial sentence for disability.

The sighted among us suffer too. Cyclists killed or maimed a record 234 pedestrians last year, 71 per cent up on 2016. Though cars pose far greater dangers overall, public anger is fraying the pedalling tribe's social licence. Starting this month, the mayor of Como, Alessandro Rapinese (who was mown down by a rogue rider in July), has banned all two-wheeled traffic from the Italian city's centre.

A better answer is a mix of new regulation, better enforcement and social pressure. Start with those monstrous, fat-tyred electric bikes that can travel as fast as a car. Without tax, insurance, number plates and licensed riders, these are completely illegal. They should not be imported, sold or ridden. Police should arrest their users and impound the vehicles. Powerful e-scooters, the phone-snatchers' vehicle of choice, are an illegal menace too.

Next is the minority of cyclists whose behaviour, in the words of Will Norman, London's walking and cycling commissioner, is "totally unacceptable". Even if they don't hit anyone, they make us all feel unsafe. Here, the answer is deterrence, education and changing mores. Running red lights or careening down the pavement should be shameful and risky. Then it will stop.

City of London police (so much nimbler than their counterparts in the bloated Met) show the way. They run spot-checks in the Square Mile. Reckless riders must pay a £50 fine or meet blind people for a friendly talking to; one of them is the persuasive Kate. I doubt the miscreants will need another reminder.

The dockless e-bikes (now 50,000 of them in London and many more in other cities) are a different problem. Their operators are using the public realm (roads and pavements) to make money while dodging the costs they impose on the rest of us. The arrival of these machines, speed-limited but heavy and often ridden by novices, has coincided with that surge in pedestrian casualties.

The main operators have belatedly introduced third-party insurance and started tidying up cluttered parking hotspots. But they could do far more, using their swathes of data to identify, warn, fine and, if necessary, "off-board" (ban) their most careless customers.

Other countries manage this better. Last week I visited Saint-Malo in Brittany, where my sightseeing highlight was the city's Vélo Mat e-bikes parked in neat lines using ingenious magnetic clamps.

Belatedly, our government is acting. The introduction of new floating bus stops has been paused. London-wide regulation of dockless e-bikes is looming — far better than haphazard borough-by-borough rules. All good stuff.

But I suggest the decision-makers also spend a day trying to travel while blindfolded.

THUNDERER

Lack of gas storage puts UK's energy security at risk

Chris O'Shea

Without energy there is no economy; without energy security there can be no national security. When governments think about national security, they plan for threats before they materialise, investing in capabilities we may not need daily but which become critical when a crisis hits. Energy security deserves the same approach.

In the last five years, security crises in Ukraine and the Middle East have triggered damaging energy shocks, disrupting gas supplies and putting pressure on global energy markets. International co-operation cannot always be relied upon to find a solution. Every country will put the security of its own citizens first.

In the UK, our interconnectors move electricity and gas to and from mainland Europe and Ireland and are an important part of our energy system, but they are not a substitute for homegrown energy security. During this summer's heatwaves, our system operator, Neso, restricted electricity exports to Europe to balance the UK's electricity system.

Norway's recent comments about its role as Europe's "green battery" were a reminder that Britain needs the capacity to withstand shocks when others are facing them, too. As North Sea production has declined by 70 per cent, reliance on imports has grown. Yet our gas storage lags behind Germany, France and the Netherlands, which have around ten times more capacity than the UK.

This winter will be more concerning. EU gas stocks are at the lowest levels since records began, increasing exposure to supply shocks and price volatility. The UK is even more exposed. As one of Europe's biggest gas consumers, but with some of its lowest storage capacity, we rely on expensive imported gas to heat homes and keep the lights on.

Rough, in the North Sea, is the UK's only large-scale gas storage facility. Yet it is practically empty, as markets currently do not make it financially viable. Storage is an insurance policy against supply disruption and price spikes. But if the government chooses not to include Rough in its existing regulatory support model, it will remain empty over the winter and close by spring, losing hundreds of unionised, well-paid jobs.

The government's interim consultation on the future of gas accepts that the market is unlikely to support storage on a purely commercial basis. But we need action now. With the right framework, we can invest £2 billion to preserve one of the UK's most important energy resilience assets. This is not simply a commercial decision for Centrica; it is a strategic decision for the country. But we are running out of time.

Chris O'Shea is group chief executive of Centrica

Janice Turner Notebook

Watching the clock as I report for stamp duty

On arrival at Berlin airport, I fume silently at the EU's entry/exit scheme. At a machine I provide a photo and fingerprints, as I did just two months ago in Spain. Surely the system must be engorged with my biometric data by now and I can breeze through the e-gates? Nope. A whole Gatwick flight sighs and shuffles along, waiting an hour for a single Sunday evening border officer to stamp our passports like it's 1953.

More annoying still is departure, where a hundred-long queue makes you tense about your impending flight. Again, few officials are on duty to snap our irises before administering another quaint ink stamp. Meanwhile, the e-gates stand deserted. So much for German efficiency.

The system as advertised made perfect sense: you provide data on your first entry, which might be time-consuming but allowed frictionless electronic travel thereafter. So what's with the officials and ink stamps? An e-gate would still snare an overstayer.

Back in Gatwick, as Berliners waltz through our gates in seconds, I think peevishly that until Germany lets us do the same its citizens should join a queue.

No way back

I interviewed the designer John Galliano in 2011, at his last ever Dior couture show in Paris, a fortnight before his drunken, antisemitic ravings killed his stellar career. Like many truly creative people, he had a quicksilver, eccentric mind, telling me he'd had 1,891 past lives, including as duchesses and Buddhist monks. But fashion designers work at the nexus of art and commerce. Thousands of staff and billions of euros depended on Galliano's imagination and skill.

"You'd faint if you saw my agenda," he told me.

"Occasionally you're like, 'F*** that'. So sometimes I just walk away."

Was screaming "I love Hitler" alone in a Paris bar a kamikaze act to flee the treadmill of producing a new collection of some sort every four weeks? Such intense pressure drove Marc Jacobs (among others) to addiction; Alexander McQueen and Kate Spade took their own lives.

After his court case, Galliano followed a bespoke education programme drawn up by a rabbi, met Jewish groups and went into rehab.

So it is sad that, even now, when mental illness is better understood, New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art was pressured into cancelling an exhibition of his exquisite work.

Is atonement impossible now?

French lesson

Knowing little about Charles de Gaulle beyond his famous uniform and cartoonish silhouette, I enjoyed the recent movie about his life. I had no idea his leadership of Free France was entirely self-appointed, nor of the depth of Nazi collaboration among high-ranking officers such as the naval commander Admiral Darlan. What a magnificent, singular, infuriating figure De Gaulle was, a rare leader more cussed even than Churchill. (Interesting that Simon Russell Beale, who makes a great Winston, does not attempt to mimic that distinctive, much-impersonated voice.) Determined to pursue his own mad-cap "vive la France" schemes, De Gaulle has sailors seize the islands of Saint Pierre and Miquelon off the coast of north America just as the British government is desperately trying to persuade Roosevelt into the war. I had expected a dry history lesson. Instead, this is a familiar story told from a fascinating new side.

Green shoots

I hope someone has set up a time-lapse camera to show how the land is recovering from drought. My own garden turns greener by the day, although this summer's victims include the potted bay-leaf tree I've had for years. The beech hedge that usually rotates pleasingly through the entire autumnal colour spectrum has this year unceremoniously chucked down its leaves.

Grass is such a banal plant: we take for granted it will provide a carpet to beautify the bare earth on which we can lounge and play.

But this summer pushed it to the limit, turning lawns and parks to dustbowls. How reassuring to observe, with every shower, grass's determined rebirth.

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If Polanski means business, it's now or never

After all his fighting talk, Greens' leader faces an even bigger test in Holborn and St Pancras by-election than the PM

Hugo Rifkind

@HUGORIFKIND

And they're off! Again. "Can't get a moment's peace on this bloody planet," tweeted Count Binface on Tuesday, as Keir Starmer announced his latest resignation and the by-election bandwagon moved on to Holborn & St Pancras.

Andy Burnham won't love this. There you are, making a massive fuss about not being from London, and about moving politics out of London because London is awful, and about even having special, casual clothes that people don't understand in London because we all apparently dress like Jacob Rees-Mogg. And then you need to fight, and ideally win, a by-election in London.

You've also got to do it barely four months after your party suffered major London losses in local elections to the Greens and your most high-profile opponent, probably, is a Green. This, while you're simultaneously in the midst of a nuanced repositioning of your party's stance over Gaza and must fight opponents who will use even the attempt of nuance to accuse you of facilitating genocide. And yet, despite all this, it's not Burnham who, right now, faces the biggest test. Rather, it's Zack Polanski.

Polanski doesn't live in Holborn & St Pancras but he can always move the barge. As of this week he has led the Greens for a year but has never been an MP. Back in February, he opted not to risk putting himself forward in Gorton & Denton — ultimately won by his colleague Hannah Spencer — despite having grown up in nearby Salford.

Officially, the rationale was that he was waiting for a vacant constituency in London, partly because, as he later told The Times, it would mean he could commute, greenly, by bike. Well, here one is. Where could be better? Like me, I expect he has a decent number of relatives in Finchley and Golders Green. Although I'm not sure he'd thrive.

Holborn & St Pancras, though, is a messy place. On one level, it's precisely the sort of constituency the Greens could storm. It is urban and ethnically diverse. More than half of the population are graduates and between a quarter and a third are currently students, thanks to many of the constituent bits of the University of London. There will be many, many instinctive environmentalists, making even the protest votes less Binface and more Greenbinface. Plus, it has a history of quite liking the harder left, candidates well to the left of Starmer taking almost 30 per cent of the vote in 2024.

Alas, "candidates" is a plural. Rather than being a Green, Starmer's main rival in 2024 was Andrew Feinstein, a South African former anti-apartheid activist who would go on to be instrumental in setting up the Jeremy Corbyn-meets-Zarah Sultana internecine argument engine that is Your Party. "Aha," you might be thinking, "so that's Your Party against the Greens. Awkward."

> This is where it has all been heading, if it was heading anywhere

But ho ho, not so fast. For, despite having helped found Your Party, Feinstein doesn't appear to actually be in it, following a series of insanely complicated fights about controlling donations and mailing lists.

This week, Feinstein spoke out, declaring: "We must ensure that all progressive forces in Holborn & St Pancras unite in order to deliver an MP who represents us and will work for us." Alas, he hasn't yet said who that should be. Clearly, it's great news for the Greens if Feinstein means Polanski. But less so if Feinstein means Feinstein.

With all this going on, you could well understand why Polanski might give this one a swerve. To retain any credibility at all, though, he simply can't. The whole point of his leadership, as he has often said, is to fundamentally reconfigure not only Green politics but the left altogether.

"We are here to replace you," he told Labour, bluntly, when he became leader last year. And it's hard to keep arguing that you can unite ten million Labour voters nationwide when you don't even rate your chances of uniting a handful of fellow travellers in Camden who have marginally different leaflets.

Speaking on my Times Radio show yesterday, Megan Kenyon of the New Statesman pointed out that it's not actually up to Polanski whether he stands in Holborn & St Pancras, because the Greens insist that each constituency chooses for itself. But if the leader of the Greens can't even win over the actual Greens, he's really in trouble.

It's also possible that Polanski doesn't much want to be an MP. His career icon, Nigel Farage, has hardly blossomed in the job, looking diminished in the chamber even when he bothers to turn up. And he at least has the excuse of sometimes being somewhere he can't cycle there from. On the outside, Polanski can look like a revolutionary. Inside, he'd be an uncomfortable backbencher with hardly any friends.

It was only in May, after the Greens' various local election victories, that Polanski declared: "It's very clear that the new politics is the Green Party versus Reform." At the time, this sounded merely like an unrealistic ambition. After a long, long summer, it sounds like mad hubris. Even if Polanski does stand, which recent reporting suggests he will, he now faces a far stronger Labour Party and a much diminished sense that two-party politics is as over as it recently seemed.

Even if he won, you wonder if Polanski could possibly hold on come the next election and whether he'd come to regret not having waited for an easier London berth, perhaps further east, where he could have ditched the green stuff altogether and relied upon a Gaza-motivated Muslim vote to make him the new George Galloway.

Right now, though, I don't see that he has a choice. This is where it has all been heading, if it has ever really been heading anywhere. Flinch and he's a joke.

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Letters to the Editor

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Army Reserve plea

Sir, Max Hastings (comment, Sep 1; letter, Sep 2) is right to call for the funding for expansion of the Army Reserve. Many of the skills central to modern war, from drone operation to cyberskills, are widespread in civilian life so a model whose units cost roughly a fifth of the price of their regular counterparts enables the mass we lack to be grown at an affordable price. This is recognised across most of Nato. In the US, the National Guard and US Army Reserve make up more than half the army, as is the case in all our Scandinavian allies and the Baltic states. Canada is working towards achieving the same, and France aims for an active volunteer reserve of 100,000 — ironically drawing in part on the UK's model. Meanwhile, citizen forces make up the bulk of the Ukrainians fighting for their country.
Sir Julian Brazier
Former Tory MP, Canterbury

Sir, I agree with Max Hastings that the Army Reserve has suffered from chronic underinvestment under successive governments, no matter what their political persuasion. His final point in particular struck a chord, in which he compared the public's formerly positive view of battledress when he hitchhiked in the early 1960s with the rather negative response that he would expect from today's drivers.

As a young sailor I hitchhiked between Plymouth and Portsmouth in the 1980s. The display of a "Pussers Grip" (a RN-issued canvas holdall) or a naval cap was all that was required to identify you as a sailor in need of a ride and the guarantee of a lift. I fear that today, still holding my trusty "Pussers Grip", I might be waiting considerably longer.
Jon Maunder
Bere Regis, Dorset

Ones for the road

Sir, An interesting way of measuring distance was observed on a road trip along the Nullarbor Plain in southern Australia. Stopping at a service station to fill up, we asked how far the next fuel stop was. After thinking about it, the attendant replied: "About six tinnies, mate." In other words, the amount of time it would take to drink six cans of beer.
Bruce Wells
Haywards Heath, W Sussex

Corrections and clarifications

● A picture of the abandoned Botallack tin mine in Cornwall was wrongly captioned as Hemerdon, a tungsten mine in Devon that its owners hope will become operational next year (Business, Aug 26).

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Burnham's victory of style over substance

Sir, Our new prime minister makes a great play about the need for honesty in politics ("Burnham lays blame on Brexit for UK's woes", news, Sep 2). However, in providing a list of what has gone wrong with past (Conservative) government policies, he omits to mention the financial crash (which originated in the US), Covid (wherever its origin, it was not the UK), and the war in Ukraine (caused by Russia). I am sure that Mr Burnham would claim that he would have handled all these issues well — if not brilliantly — but to ignore the damage that they caused to the UK economy does not seem to me to be the height of honesty.
Tim Kirkwood
London E12

Sir, For those of us who grew up in the 1970s, Andy Burnham's rhetoric about returning there is evidence of dangerous delusion. No doubt some transformation of the world's fifth largest economy is needed after the serial incompetence of both major parties. However, Mr Burnham claims his "diagnosis" of what that transformation should be, and how to achieve it, is based on his experience as mayor of what is, in global terms, a small city (196th in the world by population), and it shows. His diagnosis and plans, such as they are, indicate a far larger role for the state, state ownership, higher taxation and an economic environment hostile to job creation and wealth generation. These are all wholly incompatible with his objective of achieving economic growth in any, let alone all, postcodes.
Tim Fitzsimmons
Brockhampton, Glos

Sir, Like Daniel Finkelstein, I earnestly hope that in her "touch on the tiller" Kemi Badenoch will stop ignoring what's to the left of her ("Kemi's got lots right, but don't forget what's left", Sep 2). There are still plenty of us potentially to be won back. For we who survived the 1970s, that touch might include an even stronger emphasis on the evils of inflation. Rampant price and wage rises defined so much of what went wrong in society and the economy in that decade; governments of both main parties saw its corrosive dangers far too late. Regrettably, the present government shows no sign of learning that lesson.
Nigel Richardson
Hauxton, Cambs

Sir, I watched Andy Burnham in his first performance as PM at the dispatch box. He answered 125 questions from MPs in about three and a half hours. Throughout, he showed he was on top of his brief, assured and confident. But he was also courteous, humorous and willing to listen to MPs, especially those from other parties. If he did not know the answer to a question he admitted it and promised to get back to the MP. In particular, he engaged with all opposition MPs when they made sensible suggestions on policy and politics. It was, without doubt, a different style of politics and one that distinguished him from most of his recent predecessors.
Alun Evans
Former head of strategic communications, 10 Downing Street

Sir, There is a delicious irony that along with Stoke and Desborough, the other Chiltern Hundred to which Sir Keir Starmer has been appointed crown steward and bailiff, thus necessitating him to cease being a MP, is called Burnham ("Final U-turn from former leader gives Labour another headache", Sep 2).
Jonathan Smith
Redbourn, Herts

Municipal matters

Sir, Reading James Kirkup's article "MPs must look beyond their local problems" (comment, Sep 2), I was struck by how closely the same tension applies to local authority councillors. We too must balance the immediate demands of casework with the broader responsibility of shaping and scrutinising policy on behalf of our residents. The crucial difference is that, unlike MPs, councillors do not have teams of caseworkers to manage the volume of problems that come through our inboxes. We deal with every school place appeal, every delayed Send assessment, every struggle to access care, every broken pavement or missed bin ourselves.

Yet this burden is also our greatest insight. Only by grappling with the individual frustrations of residents do we truly understand where council systems fail, where processes are opaque and where services need reform. The detail of casework is not a distraction from policy; it is the foundation of good policy.
Mike Steel
Essex county councillor;
Great Waltham, Essex

Youth joblessness

Sir, I admire Emily Shulman's resilience and wish her every success ("The brutal reality of the graduate job search", Aug 31; letter, Sep 2). For graduates like her, might social work be worth considering? It offers a rewarding and varied career, with opportunities in local and central government, the NHS, courts, charities and the voluntary sector. There is a continuing need for bright, motivated and resilient social workers, and many roles offer flexible working. There are many excellent qualifying courses, often with bursaries and other financial support. And, although no career is completely AI-proof, social work involves the kind of work that cannot easily be replaced. Emily asks how graduates can gain experience when entry-level jobs demand it already. Social work offers a different proposition: qualify, and there is a career waiting for you.
Professor David Wilkins
Cardiff University

Sir, Those of us who managed to do paper rounds — up at 6am, rain or shine — or work in shops after school and at weekends without the benefit of soft skills training are amazed at this rationale as to why young people can't find work. Perhaps the fact that we had no choice stiffened the resolve.
Sandie Boynton
Astbury, Cheshire

State of maternity

Sir, Alice Thomson is right that the UK's vital maternity service has lost its way ("Women shouldn't have to fear giving birth", Sep 2). The reason is that for the past 30 years it has been run by the government, not by doctors or midwives. The "Changing Childbirth" report of 1993 made "normal birth" a government priority, and led to doctors being excluded from maternity care as much as possible. Ever since, they have had no voice in how the service is organised. This error has been ignored by successive inquiries into the disastrous results. I've tried to explain these basic facts to the new health secretary but received no reply. I hope she reads Thomson's article; fundamental change is needed.
James Drife
Emeritus professor of obstetrics and gynaecology, Leeds

WHAT'S IN THIS BAG? IT'S GUNS

FROM THE TIMES SEPTEMBER 3, 1926

New Scotland Yard detectives yesterday seized revolvers and cartridges which, it is believed, were intended for the Republican Party in Ireland. About 9.30 in the morning Detective-sergeant Foster and another officer saw a well-dressed young man step from a tramcar in City-road, carrying a leather suit case which appeared to be unusually bulky and heavy. The officers became suspicious and asked the man what was in the case. He replied, "It's guns."

They opened the bag and found in it 15 six-chambered revolvers and 105 cartridges, while in the pocket of the man's overcoat was a five-chambered revolver. As he declined to say whether he held a permit to carry firearms the detectives took him to Old-street police station, where he was seen later by Superintendent McBrien, of the Special Branch, who recognized him as a prominent Irish republican. The man, who declined to give his name and address, was then charged with having revolvers in his possession which were supposed to be stolen or otherwise unlawfully obtained, and with having firearms without the necessary permit.

● Late August and the first three weeks of September mark the season of the Highland gatherings. Oban and Inverness are important meetings, but that held in the most truly Highland atmosphere is the Skye Gathering at Portree. Skye is the Mecca of pipers, for here the MacCrimmons (hereditary pipers to the chiefs of MacLeod at Dunvegan) had their college, to which pipers from all parts of Scotland came for a long course of seven years' tuition.

There was this year one man who, to the judges, seemed to rise to heights of inspiration, and that was Pipe-Major GS MacLennan, late of the Gordon Highlanders. He played Patrick Mòr MacCrimmon's masterpiece "The Lament for the Children". This beautiful pibroch, more than 200 years old, was composed on the loss, within a year, of all the piper's seven beloved children. MacLennan seemed to enter into the spirit of his tune, as though inspired by the personalities of the MacCrimmons themselves. But there is no doubt that his audience helped him, for nowhere more than in Skye is classical pipe music better appreciated.

THETIMES.COM/ARCHIVE

Art of diplomacy

Sir, It was good of Matthew Parris to mention my book, *A Different Kind of Diplomat*, in his Notebook (Sep 2), but he sidesteps my point. As a result of Anthony Eden's reforms, the postwar Foreign Office was not the elitist body it is sometimes portrayed as. In the 1940s to 1960s, many of its recruits entered the Foreign Service directly from grammar schools or their Scottish equivalents on the basis of A-levels and an interview alone. The social range of the intake broadened correspondingly; some these recruits eventually progressed to the highest posts. Matthew is, however, right to say that the point at which a new entrant entered the Foreign Service was often never entirely forgotten.

Textbooks on diplomatic etiquette certainly existed. They could certainly be mocked but were occasionally useful to personnel posted overseas for the first time, especially a diplomat who had started life in a council house and was posted into a world of protocol and black-tie dinner parties.
Michael Hodge
Battle, E Sussex

Guard our veterans

Sir, I commend Al Carns's Thunderer (Sep 1) and indeed the Policy Exchange paper he mentions, "The Special Air Service in Northern Ireland". One simple, dispassionate and understated passage on page 17 should resonate with every right-minded citizen: "A state that cannot credibly be relied on to protect its own soldiers from retrospective legal jeopardy will, over time, find it more difficult to ask those soldiers to take the risks that effective military operations, especially by special forces, require." This sentence lies at the heart of veterans' concerns, but also demonstrates in its simplicity why parliament would be quite wrong to pass the Northern Ireland Troubles Bill in its present form.
James Stevenson
Hanging Langford, Wilts

Lightweight rowing

Sir, Further to the letters (Sep 2) on rowing, the International Olympic Committee does not think weight-categorised events should (other than in weightlifting and combat-type sports) be included in its programme. The effect of this has significant financial implications as most countries' funding systems are concentrated only on Olympic events. The UK is among these, and despite the world governing body still offering some lightweight events there is little opportunity or incentive at domestic events for lightweight rowing.
Richard Philips
Vice-president, London Rowing Club

Sir, Julian Hall (letter, Sep 2) has perhaps never attended a rugby sevens match, where skill, speed and athleticism are much to be admired. Entertainment is at a high level; bulk and brutality are entirely absent.
Lawrence McVeigh
Rochester, Kent

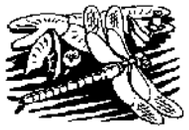
Run rabbit run

Sir, Years ago my friend and I ended up with a surplus of rabbit (letters, Aug 29 & Sep 1) after helping a local farmer to clear a field of the pests. The best dish to make was tandoori rabbit: cooked in a slow-cooker, it was far superior to chicken.
Stewart Alcock
Filey, N Yorks

Daily Universal Register

Andy Burnham hosts President Macron at No 10 for talks; Reform UK holds a Business Day as its conference opens in Birmingham.

Nature notes



"Parsons Wood, planted in 2012", the sign on the gate announced. Lifting the sneck, the writer of your nature notes entered the trees. Though the oaks were mere teenagers, the young plantation already had the sense of calm that characterises late-summer woodland. Given this year's searing drought, the freshness and green was most heartening. And it wasn't only humans that were enjoying the verdant seclusion: a robin suddenly appeared. Still deep in its annual moult, the bird seemed a different species from the redbreast we all know and love. Mottled, pilled and faded, it looked as though it had passed through an intensive cycle in a washing machine. Parsons Wood is an ideal refuge for the bird as it regrows its plumage. JONATHAN TULLOCH

Birthdays today

Sir Gareth Southgate, *pictured*, footballer, England (1995-2004), and manager of England (2016-24), 56; **Geoff Arnold**, cricketer, England (1967-75), 82; **Noah Baumbach**, director and screenwriter, *Marriage Story* (2020), *Barbie* (2023, co-writer), 57; **Sarah Bradford (Viscountess Bangor)**, historian and author, 88; **Caryl Churchill**, playwright, *Love and Information* (2012), 88; **Fearne Cotton**, TV and radio presenter, 45; **Brunello Cucinelli**, designer, 73; **Tony Defries**, impresario who managed David Bowie, 83; **Kiran Desai**, author, *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006, Man Booker prizewinner), 55; **Mario Draghi**, prime minister of Italy (2021-22), 79; **Lord (Euan) Geddes**, deputy speaker (2002-April 2026), House of Lords, 89; **Sir Nick Gibb**, minister for schools (2010-12, 2014-21, 2022-23), 66; **Malcolm Gladwell**, author, *The Tipping Point* (2000), and journalist, 63; **Guido Imbens**, co-recipient of the Nobel memorial prize in economics (2021), 63; **Al Jardine**, singer, the Beach Boys, 84; **Sir Ranil Jayawardena**, environment, food and rural affairs secretary (2022), 40; **Rachel Johnson**, journalist and author, *Rake's Progress* (2020, 2021), editor of The Lady (2009-12), 61; **Steve Jones**, guitarist, the Sex Pistols, 71; **Dawid Malan**, cricketer, Yorkshire, England (2017-23), 39; **Claire Miles**, chief executive, Stagecoach, Yell (2019-22), 54; **Michael More-Molyneux**, lord-lieutenant of Surrey (who retires today), 75; **Rob Page**, footballer, manager of Wales (2020-24), 52; **Josie Rourke**, theatre and film, *Mary Queen of Scots* (2018), director, artistic director, Donmar Warehouse (2012-19), 50; **Charlie Sheen**, actor, *Wall Street* (1987), *Two and a Half Men* (2003-11), 61; **Dick Strawbridge**, presenter, *Escape to the Chateau* (2016-22), 67; **Shaun White**, US snowboarder, three-time Olympic gold medallist (2006, 2010, 2018), 40.

On this day

In 1939 Britain and France declared war on Germany, after prime minister Neville Chamberlain announced on the Home Service that a deadline had passed for the withdrawal of German troops from Poland.

The last word

"All free men remember that in the final choice a soldier's pack is not so heavy a burden as a prisoner's chains." President Eisenhower, inaugural address (1953)

Getting Real

As the interest on Britain's debt rises, magical thinking pervades Labour on the issue of spending. While defence is starved, welfare continues to climb

Two and a half cheers for the Conservatives for laying out a path to spending 3 per cent of gross domestic product by 2030 on defence, and the savings they would make to pay for it. A theoretical exercise it may be, but at least it shows how an essential target can be met by the reallocation of resources and relatively modest cuts to the welfare budget, rather than by yet more tax increases. Andy Burnham, the prime minister, refused to rule out the latter during his first PMQs yesterday.

The Tory plan involves increasing defence spending by £10 billion per year until the end of the decade. The boost would be financed by, among other measures, cutting housing benefits to raise £4 billion, reimposing the two-child benefit cap to claw back £3.1 billion and ending the VAT exemption on Motability vehicles, saving £1 billion. The proposal follows an earlier Tory promise to cut welfare spending by £23 billion.

Meanwhile, Labour continues to procrastinate on defence despite increasingly concerning signals from Russia, including an attack using an explosive-laden drone on Leipzig airport last month. President Putin, meanwhile, has hinted at strikes on British targets in retaliation for providing military assistance to Ukraine. Yet, even in its third year of power, Labour is refusing to commit to a solid timetable for reaching 3 per cent. The chancellor, John Healey, resigned as defence secretary in June over the failure of Sir Keir Starmer to agree to that figure by 2030 as a waypoint on the road to fulfilling the Nato target of 3.5 per cent for member states by 2035. Now, Burnham and Healey are again refusing to come clean until the conclusion of a spending review some time next year.

Defence is a necessary exception to what should be happening: a wholesale re-evaluation of government spending, resulting in freezes and cuts in all areas that cannot show a direct positive impact on economic growth. Consuming some 45 per cent of GDP, the British state has become horribly distended. It pays for anxious young people to sit at home and do nothing, for the depressed to drive a new car, and for huge numbers of public employees to enjoy gold-plated pensions (cost: 1.2 per cent of GDP). Those clever enough to game the multifaceted benefits system can "earn" more than the family across the street working long hours. That can include extra money for having lots of children, despite lacking the private means to do so.

The Conservatives are on the right track at last but even they balk at slaying the most sacred cows. For example, instead of ending VAT on Motability vehicles, why not scrap Motability altogether? For years it has been a licence to scam. A brand new car may indeed lift the spirits of somebody claiming the mobility allowance for depression — the average age of a car on Britain's roads is ten years.

But Motability pales besides that most bloated of sacred cows, the state pension triple lock. Only 16 years old, it nevertheless occupies an unchallenged position in the social security firmament. No political party, not even the Tories, will commit to its abolition, despite the menace it poses to the public finances. One of the problems involved in persuading pensioners to accept more modest increases (no one is asking for a cut) is that they will ask where the money saved will go. If the answer is more welfare for working-age claimants, appealing to senior citizens' better nature is unlikely to work. Cuts to the state must be comprehensive.

There is, of course, no sign of this necessary retrenchment. Mr Burnham appears to be a practitioner of magical thinking: imagine happy things and they will come to pass. Nowhere in the prime minister's summer of love did cuts feature. Lord O'Neill, his friend and occasional economic adviser, stares at the gilt yield graph heading north and pleads for people in government to "get real" about spending. But that would spoil the party, the Labour Party. Real is always for tomorrow.

Political Prisoner

Imran Khan is suffering inhumane treatment at the hands of Pakistan's authorities

Imran Khan has been in prison for three years suffering in the most disgraceful conditions imaginable. The 73-year old, Pakistan's former prime minister and one of its greatest cricketers, is serving two separate sentences on a raft of corruption charges that he strongly denies. His initial arrest followed a no-confidence vote when Pakistan's powerful military withdrew its support for him, prompting protests on the streets.

Mr Khan's circumstances are deplorable. He is being held in a 6ft by 8ft cell typically used for those on death row, with no reading material aside from the Quran. He is given soiled brown water to drink. Visitors are forbidden and he has been kept in confinement for 23 hours a day. Sulaiman and Kasim Khan, his sons, have been unable to visit their father in person since 2022, and have been prevented from speaking to him on the telephone for months on end. They have described his living conditions as inhumane "torture tactics".

Unsurprisingly, Mr Khan's health has taken a turn for the worse. He has lost 85 per cent of his vision in one eye because of a blood clot, while his blood pressure has risen due to the strains of solitary confinement. It is not only Mr Khan's family who are fearful for his welfare. In July 2024, the United Nations working group on arbitrary detention said the politician's imprisonment violated international law. Then, in December last year, Alice Jill Edwards, a UN special rapporteur on torture, called on Pakistan to improve Mr Khan's conditions to comply with international law. No action has been taken to meet this demand.

Such findings are disputed by Pakistan's government, which insists on describing Mr Khan as a "convicted prisoner", despite widespread criticism of his treatment at the hands of the country's judicial system. It also maintains his prison conditions are humane. If this is the case, Pakistan's leaders would have nothing to fear from greater openness.

Instead, they have reacted with hostility and defensiveness to mentions about Mr Khan's plight. Last week, Mr Khan's sons were interviewed on the first day of the second England-Pakistan test. Kasim accused Pakistan's government of "blatantly trying to kill" their father. After the interview, the Pakistan Cricket Board suggested that it might order its players not to take to the field the next day. It was an empty threat, but it highlights the acute sensitivity of the issue.

Yesterday, Mr Khan's sons accused Pakistan of trying to kill their father and pass it off as a "natural death", akin to the fate of the Russian dissident Alexei Navalny. Thanks to concerns expressed by lawyers, Pakistan's supreme court ordered a private health assessment. Instead, Mr Khan was assessed at a government hospital and pronounced fit to return to jail. Mr Khan's family insist that he will not bargain for his release by promising to quit politics.

It is wholly unacceptable that Mr Khan has been kept in solitary confinement and deprived of the medical care he needs. Earlier this year, 22 former international cricket captains called on Pakistan to ensure that Mr Khan was accorded "immediate, adequate and ongoing medical attention". They included Mike Atherton, this newspaper's chief cricket correspondent.

Pakistan's conduct in this matter is indefensible. Mr Khan is clearly the subject of extreme political persecution, now threatening his life. The British government must protest in the strongest terms.

A Stitch in Time

The loan of the Bayeux Tapestry is a supreme example of cultural diplomacy

About 950 years after it was designed and embroidered, almost certainly by Anglo-Saxon artists and needleworkers in Kent, the most famous strip of bleached linen in history is back in England and on display. Last night King Charles, a descendant — direct or indirect — of no fewer than three of the men (Edward the Confessor, Harold Godwinson and William, Duke of Normandy, soon to become William I) depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry, was given a preview at the British Museum, hosted officially by George Osborne, with President Macron presiding. The fragile artefact survived its return journey across the Channel intact, the only ripped yarn in evidence being the action-packed 11th century tale depicted.

It is hard to begrudge Macron his moment, given the Elysee's longstanding support helped overcome considerable French opposition to the ten-month loan. A degree of anxiety was understandable, however, given the threats, from rioting Huguenots to vengeful French revolutionaries to Gestapo looters, posed to the tapestry's safety over the centuries. Fortunately, the optimist's arguments won out. The exchange of world-class art across the planet is not only evidence of advanced civilisation, but one of its guarantors.

The British public are certainly appreciative, with the first tranche of tickets to view the artwork selling out in a day, earning £2.5 million for the museum. As with the recent, wildly popular Tracey Emin show, and the ongoing record-breaking Frida Kahlo retrospective, the blockbuster exhibition is alive and well. Just as the treasures of Tutankhamun entranced a generation when they toured the western world in the 1970s, Bayeux's epic narrative, 224ft long but just 20in high, sometimes called the world's first (and longest) comic strip, will surely captivate a contemporary audience in London.

World

Pakistan 'plans to kill Dad and say he died naturally'

Pakistan
Catherine Philp World Affairs Editor

Imran Khan's sons have accused Pakistan of trying to kill their father and pass off his assassination as a natural death, after the authorities denied the cricketer-turned-politician access to court-ordered medical care and returned him to solitary confinement.

Sulaiman and Kasim Khan said they feared a scenario similar to that involving the Russian dissident Alexei Navalny, whose death by poisoning in an Arctic penal colony in 2024 was passed off by Moscow as the result of a heart ailment.

Khan, 73, has been held in solitary confinement in a cell measuring 6ft by 8ft in Rawalpindi's Adiala jail since his arrest in 2023 on corruption charges, which he denies. His arrest came a year after he was ousted in a confidence vote after Pakistan's powerful military withdrew its support for him, setting off street protests.

"Multiple prisoners have died of hepatitis from the poor conditions in there and the tools they use to treat people," Kasim Khan, 27, said. He expressed his "multiple worries and multiple ways that if everything does quiet down enough, they could eventually blame it on natural death".

Asked what he feared, Kasim replied: "An assassination."

Sulaiman, 29, ruled out his father striking a deal to step down from politics to secure his freedom. "I imagine that he has been offered various deals [for] house arrest or exile and so on as long as he remains silent," he said. "But so many of his own party members are in prison as well, so that would have to be part of any deal. And not only that, I don't think he would accept remaining silent or quitting politics."

Lawyers say Khan's health has deteriorated recently in the harsh prison conditions, prompting the Supreme Court to order Khan's transfer to a private hospital for an independent health assessment. Instead, he was briefly taken to a government hospital, where doctors pronounced him fit to return to jail.

In February a roster of former international cricket captains wrote to the Pakistani government to demand Khan be given proper medical attention. International attention about Khan's plight was reignited when Sky News broadcast an interview with his sons during the Pakistan-England test match last week, prompting threats from Pakistan to abandon the match.

The Khans said the British government "could do more than it has" to support them and their father and that they hoped to speak to Andy Burnham. "I would firstly love to have just a private conversation with him, just to understand where he lies on all of it, on this kind of foreign intervention," Kasim said.

TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER RICHARD POHLE

Sulaiman Khan, far left, and his brother Kasim say the British government could do more to help their imprisoned father Imran, below

David Lammy, the former foreign secretary, had urged the brothers not to travel to Pakistan to try to see their father, saying if they were to be arrested, the UK government would not be able to support them.

The brothers said: "What we would want from [Burnham] is to understand that we might be able to have some support or safe passage if we are ever to get these visas. So if we are able to go over and see our father, just to know that there is some level of support, we know that that would be something that the Pakistani regime would fear.

"There's nothing they fear more than foreign countries, foreign intervention. But as long as we go without any kind of support, then they have complete power in Pakistan, they can do absolutely anything. They're very, very unpredictable and chaotic."

The brothers, whose mother, Jemima Khan (née Goldsmith) was married to Khan for nine years until 2004, have not seen their father in person since an assassination attempt on him four years ago and last spoke to him by phone six months ago. "I think it's purposeful. They don't want us to speak to him, they want him to be completely isolated, to have no human contact and to break him," Kasim said.

Bridget Phillipson, the minister for women and equalities, said calls for meetings with figures in the government, including the foreign secretary, "will have been heard".

Khan's sister, Uzma Khan, managed to accompany him briefly on his hospital visit last month and reported back his own fears that he would die in jail.

"He himself said that he feared that the Pakistani establishment could be looking to do to him what happened to Morsi in Egypt," Sulaiman, 29, said, referring to the former Egyptian president who died during imprisonment after being denied medical help. "He directly made that comparison. So that is our fear, definitely."

Khan's sister passed on her own assessment of his health, including the 85 per cent vision loss in his right eye caused by a blood clot.

"The more worrying aspect for us is the kind of high blood pressure, heart palpitations and anxiety," Kasim said. "That's just very uncharacteristic of him. So it's very hard to imagine him feeling any of those kind of things. I've seen him in tough situations, not feeling a shred of any of those. So that's what's really worried me particularly."

Sulaiman agreed. "It is really worrying for us just to hear the toll that the isolation has been taking. But I guess anyone who'd had no human contact for ten months would be struggling."

This week Pakistan's Supreme Court ordered an immediate end to Khan's solitary confinement. His sons are doubtful the authorities will heed that judgment either. "It's a military dictatorship," Kasim said. "They have complete and utter control over everything that happens over there."

The calls the brothers have had with Imran were "heavily monitored and sometimes have been cut off when we've touched on sensitive topics", Sulaiman said.

The last time they spoke to their father, Kasim said, was when they visited Lahore for a week. "Before that we weren't there for about a year and a half. So it's been about four or five years since we spent quality time with him," he said. "In that time we've grown so much. I feel like I've gone from boy to adult. And so there are so many questions I want to ask him about his life, his youth, his family."

Pakistan is treating Imran Khan inhumanely, leading article, page 23
For Imran Khan's full interview, go to Times Radio's YouTube channel

Thai 'Sin City' pushes boat out for 5,000 US sailors

One is a force of unstoppable power, a vast killing machine of 5,000 highly trained military personnel. The other is one of Asia's most notorious pleasure spots, a town devoted to sunbathing, drinking and debauchery. This week they come together — and the results could be spectacular (George Styllis and Richard Lloyd Parry write).

Yesterday the Thai city of Pattaya welcomed the first of thousands of US sailors who have spent 286 days at sea without a single stop. The USS Abraham Lincoln docked in the nearby port of Laem Chabang, allowing its sailors and mariners to set foot on land for the first time in more than nine months.

The aircraft carrier had been deployed in November last year but was redirected from the Pacific to the Middle East after the US and Israel began their war on Iran.

Thai police have increased their presence in Pattaya with additional patrols around the main beachfront and nightlife districts. They have also detained women suspected of soliciting, a token effort in a town awash with businesses supplying female company to male customers. Prostitution is technically illegal in Thailand.

The Lincoln's stint at sea drew complaints from relatives that crew

Estonia takes Swedish prisoners but says no to UK
Page 26

Young activist faces life in jail in Hong Kong
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CHALINEE THIRASUPA/REUTERS; RUNGROJ YONGRIT/EPA; ANTHONY WALLACE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Sailors come ashore in Thailand after 286 days at sea on the Abraham Lincoln, below left. Soi 6, below, is out of bounds

members were suffering from mental health problems after so long on board.

One sailor who had ventured into the city yesterday evening was keen to dispel memories of the long stint at sea. "The deployment sucked," he said, standing at a drinks truck. "The port is awesome. It's a great reward."

The announcement that the carrier would finally dock in Thailand revived memories of the country's history as an R&R destination for US servicemen.

In Pattaya, bar and club staff were excited by the crew's arrival. "Last year they came here. They drank a lot — too much," said Sorrawit Wonglai, manager of Bricks & Barrels on Pattaya's main strip. "It's good."

Maprang Siriyaporn, a cashier at Sweeties, a hostess bar, said she hoped some of the servicemen would patronise her establishment during a lean time for businesses in the area. If the bar could attract 80 customers a day, compared with the 30 it sees at present, she would be happy, she said.

"If they come and spend money on the ladies and on the bar, it would help pay our rent, electricity and water," she said. "That would be very good."

Thailand is a treaty ally of the US and was a popular resort for service members on leave during the Vietnam War. Their nightly forays fuelled the red-light industries of Bangkok and Pattaya and were the cause of widespread drunkenness, lewdness and bad behaviour.

Many staff in the bars, however, say that they have always found US servicemen to be well-behaved and respectful. "They come and enjoy their time. Just drinking and dancing," Anna, a waitress at the Bricks and Barrels bar, said.

Others did not see what the fuss was about. "I feel indifferent because usually there are a lot of tourists here, from China, the Middle East," said Linda, 22, as she got ready to start her shift as a dancer in Shark bar.

The consumption of cannabis and certain risky tourist activities, including jet ski riding and parasailing, are off limits to servicemen. They are also barred from visiting Soi 6, one of Pattaya's most disreputable streets. Local police told Thai media that this was on the order of the Lincoln's commanders.

"These personnel have been aboard their ships for more than 280 days and they have all their accumulated salaries and allowances intact, because they have not had anywhere to spend the money," Poramet Ngampichet, the mayor , told the Bangkok Post.

He predicted that each serviceman or woman was likely to spend $100 to $150 per day during the five days of leave, amounting to about $3 million in total.

Iran threat to hack US water supplies

United States
David Charter Washington

Iran is seeking to bring the war home to the US with cyberattacks on computer systems controlling energy, telecommunications and water supplies.

An Iranian hacking group predicted "unexpected and critical events", although recent attempts to break into infrastructure networks had failed, NBC News reported.

The threat came amid tit-for-tat attacks in and around the Strait of Hormuz after a month's pause in fighting, signalling a renewed battle for control after US claims that vessels are able to transit safely under cover of darkness because it has been cleared of mines.

President Trump threatened on Tuesday that Iran would be "hit again at a much harder and higher level" if it retaliated for US strikes he said were carried out to thwart Iranian efforts to fire sea mines into the strait and develop radar facilities.

When Iran did launch counterattacks, Trump's response yesterday was to taunt the Tehran regime with a social media post suggesting the waterway should be named after him.

"Now that we have it under USA control, should we change the name Hormuz Strait to TRUMP STRAIT???" posted Trump, 80. "Like America itself, it would be 'hotter' than ever before!"

Iranian state media said an American missile killed four people at a wedding party in the coastal town of Kuhestak on Tuesday, two women and two children aged four and 16, and wounded 68 more.

Iran also said that the US attacks killed four members of its paramilitary Revolutionary Guard and ten members of the Guard's volunteer Basij forces.

"Make no mistake: these crimes will not go unpunished," Ebrahim Azizi, chairman of the Iranian parliament's national security and foreign policy committee, posted on X.

Tim Hawkins, a spokesman for US Central Command (Centcom), said the US military was "aware of the reports [of the wedding deaths and injuries], which originated from Iranian state media, and we are looking into them". He would not say if Centcom had begun a formal investigation.

Iran called Trump's bluff by launching a widespread response, including missiles and drones fired at US bases in Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Bahrain and Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan region.

Threats of cyber warfare follow a successful Iranian hack that disabled an unidentified British power plant for four days last month, described by security officials as a "warning shot" about its ability to target critical infrastructure.

"Soon, the United States will witness unexpected and critical events in the energy, water and telecommunications industries," the Iranian hacking group, APT IRAN, said on Telegram on Sunday.

The FBI said last month that it was investigating cyberattacks on municipal water systems in at least seven states. In Minnesota, the hackers targeted more than 30 municipal water facilities, all without success.

Days before these attacks, the US Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency said Iranian hackers were trying to break into internet-connected devices used to manage American infrastructure. In a second alert two weeks ago, the agency advised all critical infrastructure organisations to enhance their defences against hacking.

Water and other infrastructure systems often relied on basic computers for day-to-day operations, making them vulnerable, cybersecurity experts told NBC News.

The Antichrist may already be among us, claims Vance

Max Kendix Washington

JD Vance has speculated that the Antichrist could be "walking among us" and said he would not be shocked if the world was already in the "end times".

The vice-president made the comments in an interview with Bryce Crawford, a 22-year-old evangelist Christian podcaster, while promoting his new book *Communion: Finding My Way Back to Faith*.

Vance, who was an evangelical Protestant as a teenager, was later an atheist before being baptised and confirmed as a Catholic in 2019. "Do I think that we're in the end times? I don't know. I think that it's probably bad for me spiritually to focus too much on it," he said. "There are things about the world that make me feel not shocked if the Antichrist was walking among us."

He added: "I tend to think that while I wouldn't be shocked if we are living in the end times, what I'm trying to focus on is doing as much of God's work as possible right now, and that if that leads to the end times, OK." The literal interpretation of the end times in Biblical prophecy involves the emergence of an Antichrist and then the second coming of Jesus Christ.

In another answer on the topic, Vance gave the example of a friend of his whose wife was using an AI chatbot for counselling, before realising it was agreeing with everything she wrote.

"There's no real human feedback, it sort of short-circuits that social part of our brain where we respond to other people's wants and needs," Vance said. "I think that's kind of satanic. When you completely divorce the human from the social element that God made us for, I think that's very bad."

In March, Vance told another conservative podcast that UFOs were "demons" instead of extraterrestrial aliens.

Vance has often credited Peter Thiel, the tech billionaire, for prompting him to reconsider his faith and to go into politics. Last year Thiel warned that Armageddon was coming and speculated who the Antichrist might be.

OMAR ASHTAWY/GETTY IMAGES

Children protest in Gaza City after Israel warned of reprisals against kite-flying. In the past kites carrying explosives or incendiary devices have been sent into Israel

Your kites are a threat, Israel tells Gaza children

He owned little in the wake of war, but the boy believed at least a small piece of the sky was his (Amal Helles and Gabrielle Weiniger write).

"When I saw my kite up in the sky, it made me happy," Taim Abu Warda, 13, told The Times from his family's tent in al-Mawasi, in the south of Gaza.

His kite, made of paper, wood and string, sits, grounded, on a small table in the tent where he and his family of five have been sheltering. Israel has warned boys like Taim that there will be reprisals against Gaza if kites are flown, because they may constitute a threat. "Forceful actions will be taken to put an end to this phenomenon [of kite flying]," Israel Katz, the defence minister, said.

For nearly three years the skies of Gaza have been streaked by militants' rockets, Israeli bombs and shells. In the years before the war, kites, too, became weapons. They were sent by militants into Israel, carrying incendiary devices to start fires.

Over the past few weeks kites have crossed the Gaza border and landed in Israel, a painful reminder, some residents of southern Israel say, of their potential to harm. The new kites have not been carrying explosives or fire, however, and children in the territory say they represent one of the few symbols of their childhoods among the ruins.

"Now we do not play anything, not football and not kites," said Abu Warda. "There are no football pitches, and even the streets are damaged. Before the war, we went to school. Now we study in tents. Everything about our lives has changed. I want to fly my kite again and see something that belongs to me up in the sky. I hope the war ends so I can go back to school and fly it without being afraid."

His mother, Iman al-Zeer, took his kite away for fear he would be targeted. "I told him he couldn't fly it any more because it could put us, and everyone around us, in danger."

Hamas accuses Israel of using the fallen kites as a "pretext" for airstrikes during the ceasefire agreed last year. Military sources were cited as saying the kites recently sent into Israel may have been from Hamas to test the response.

Israel has long had control over the goods that enter Gaza. Many items have been blocked for being "dual use", meaning that they can be repurposed by or diverted to Hamas.

"Israel isn't allowing toys into Gaza ... so we started making our own kites instead," said Rahaf Abu Tair, 14. "My kite is made from thin pieces of palm wood ... It's just a toy. When I flew it, I felt happy watching it rise into the sky. For a little while, I could forget what was happening around us."

Interviews were conducted for The Times by a reporting team in Gaza

Estonia takes inmates from Sweden but shuts door to UK

Sweden
Alex Maxia Gothenburg

Last month, four Swedish criminals landed at Amari military airbase in Estonia and were bundled into the back of a high-security van bound for Tartu prison, 130 miles to the southeast, escorted by a police motorcade.

They were the first inmates to be transferred to the Baltic state under a model that has tantalised the British right for years and was resurrected by Nigel Farage and Reform last month.

Sweden is expected to send up to 100 of its prisoners to Tartu by the end of this month, with an option to dispatch another 500 over the lifetime of the agreement.

Liisa Pakosta, Estonia's justice minister, hailed the deal as "historic" and the first time that one state had fully delegated to another the task of detaining criminals. "[These will be] Estonian prisons working with Estonian personnel and under Estonian law," she said.

On paper, the logic is simple. Sweden, which is fighting several sophisticated, international and well-armed drugs gangs, has filled its jails. Its prison population has nearly doubled over the past decade and the institutions are running at more than 140 per cent of their notional capacity. In short, it needs more cells. Estonia has them in abundance.

The country has the lowest occupancy rate in the European Union. It has about 3,000 berths but only 1,618 inmates, because of a general decline in offences and a shift towards a more flexible sentencing system. Two thirds of the bunks in Tartu are empty.

The money from Sweden — an annual lump sum of €30.6 million for the first 300 prisoners, with another €8,500 a year for each inmate over and above that — goes towards the cost of sustaining that excess capacity.

By Swedish standards, that is cheap: each prisoner held on home turf costs the taxpayer about €120,000 a year, or nearly enough to send them to board at Eton twice over. "The agreement is very good for both parties," said Gunnar Strommer, the justice minister.

It is not unprecedented. In the 2010s, Belgium and Norway both briefly outsourced several hundred prisoners to the Netherlands, only to conclude it was too expensive. Denmark struck a deal to rent 300 prison spaces in Kosovo almost five years ago, only for the implementation to be postponed.

Aside from the cost, visitation rights and jurisdictional headaches, the chief difficulty has tended to be political: people are rarely enthusiastic about their towns becoming a dumping ground for foreign thieves and murderers. A poll in June found that the Estonians were no different. Only 35 per cent viewed the Swedish deal favourably, while 54 per cent opposed it and 48 per cent wanted it to be terminated.

There are worries Estonia might import Sweden's problems with gang crime, or damage its cherished modernising image if it comes to be seen as a repository for overseas criminality. Each prisoner is profiled to minimise the risk that they might recruit or corrupt their neighbours.

Britain started negotiations with Estonia over a similar deal in 2023, under Rishi Sunak, but the project was abandoned by Sir Keir Starmer.

Last month Farage named Estonia — without consultation — as one of the countries from which a putative Reform administration might rent prison capacity. Pakosta has ruled out such an arrangement, and dismissed Farage's overtures, saying: "I'm sorry to say, but he doesn't understand the topic at all. So he made totally incompetent remarks on prison rentals."

Kremlin 'plotting to sway general election in Italy'

Italy Russia is preparing to try to influence the result of the general election next year and interfere in voting across Europe, Antonio Tajani, the foreign minister, has warned. He accused Moscow of preparing to "interfere in the free democratic elections in our countries and trying to influence popular will with this despicable activity". He added: "I'm convinced this will happen, so we have to act now."

Russia and Ukraine will be key themes in Italy's election campaign next year when the prime minister, Giorgia Meloni, is seeking a second term in office. She has been a staunch supporter of Ukraine but faces a growing challenge from Roberto Vannacci, a former special forces general and military attaché in Moscow, who demands an end to military support for Kyiv and a lifting of Russian sanctions.

Vannacci is attracting support from a large swathe of Italian voters, on the right and left, who prefer warm relations with Russia to sending munitions to Ukraine.

The deputy prime minister, Matteo Salvini, who is also at odds with Meloni over her support for Kyiv, said European states keen to sell armaments were to blame for the unending Ukraine conflict. The opposition Five Star Movement party said Tajani's comments were fuelled by "paranoia and hysteria".

Tajani said the Italian foreign ministry had been forced to set up a 24-hour cyber-defence centre to guard against attacks on Italian embassies from Russian hackers.

A munitions factory near Rome that has supplied Ukraine was damaged by an unexplained blast last month, which has been linked to potential Russian sabotage operations at other European arms factories.

In France, President Macron and Sébastien Lecornu, the prime minister, have warned that Russian intelligence agencies, led by the GRU military service, are working to influence and disrupt the campaign for next spring's presidential election. Cyberattacks on infrastructure, disinformation campaigns, stunts in the streets and sabotage have all been deployed since the GRU tried to smear Macron by pirating and doctoring his presidential election campaign emails in 2017.

Accused star cancels tour

France The singer and actor Patrick Bruel has cancelled a 35-date tour after being charged with rape. Bruel, 67, is under investigation in four cases involving sex offences. He denies wrongdoing. Some mayors of towns on the tour had said Bruel would not be welcome. He faces returning €10 million in ticket sales.

Glenlivet's whisky sour

South Africa Glenlivet has deleted a whisky advert and apologised after it was accused of turning a 1956 anti-apartheid women's march into a marketing prop. It linked the activist Sophia Williams-De Bruyn, who was 18 at the time, to the whisky's 18-year maturation. Her family said her courage and sacrifice had been "commercially exploited".

Lion found in raid on ranch

Mexico More than 135 animals, including lions, jaguars and tigers, were seized in raids on properties owned by a fuel-smuggling ring in the northeast border state of Tamaulipas. The authorities also found 68,000 litres of diesel fuel and firearms. The animals, all on a single ranch, also included ocelots and a lemur.

Rembrandt returns to plundered town

Germany
Oliver Moody Berlin

In the bleak midwinter of early 1946, Victoria Adelaide, the last duchess of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha and a relation of British royalty by blood and marriage, made off with a handful of venerable paintings that had once been part of her family's collection.

Her homeland in the east German state of Thuringia, initially taken by the Americans, had been handed over to the Soviets a few months earlier in exchange for west Berlin.

It was patently only a matter of weeks before Stalin's "trophy brigades" would drop by the estate to see what treasures could be snaffled for the Hermitage in St Petersburg.

Adelaide had the artworks removed from the old ducal seat of Gotha and furtively transported on foot for some 50 miles through the unseasonably soggy Thuringian Forest to Coburg, across the Bavarian border and thus in the relative safety of the American sector. The smallest of them, barely larger than a postcard, was a haunting self-portrait painted by Rembrandt in 1629, when he was only 23 years old and first beginning to turn heads in the Dutch stadtholder's court.

For decades the painting has stood as a symbol of the vast cultural wealth that was plundered from Gotha after 1945 by unscrupulous staff members, looters from the Kremlin and the city's own former aristocratic masters.

Now, for the first time in 80 years, it has come home.

This weekend the city's Ducal Museum will open an exhibition on Rembrandt's explosive rise in 1632, the most productive year of his life.

Timo Trümper, the head of research and collections at Gotha's Schloss Friedenstein Foundation, who co-curated the show, said it had been the year in which the artist started to fashion himself into a brand in a recognisably modern sense of the word, including by signing his works with his first name.

"This is the point where he elevates himself above the status of a tradesman and says, well, he is 'Rembrandt', the master, and at the same time he is pursuing all kinds of different clever marketing concepts," Trümper said.

Rembrandt's 1629 self-portrait was moved from Gotha to Bavaria in 1946

Alongside 12 of Rembrandt's paintings and 30 etchings that have remained in Gotha under the aegis of the Schloss Friedenstein Foundation, the exhibition includes 44 of his works loaned by 25 other institutions.

The 1629 self-portrait was probably acquired by Ernest the Pious, the first duke of Saxe-Gotha, while Rembrandt was still alive.

As Protestant nobles in an age of devastating denominational wars, the dukes maintained close ties with the Netherlands and took a strong interest in the northern European Renaissance.

They clung on to the picture until at least 1928, when the British-born duke Charles Edward, a grandson of Queen Victoria and cousin of Kaiser Wilhelm II who ultimately fell in with the Nazi party, was obliged to transfer a large portion of the contents of his Ducal Museum to a public foundation after being stripped of his titles in the German revolution ten years earlier.

The Schloss Friedenstein Foundation maintains that Victoria Adelaide, Charles Edward's wife, had no right to take the Rembrandt in 1946. Yet the former noble family sold the works in the 1950s. The Bavarian State Paintings Collection acquired the Rembrandt in 1953 for 75,000 marks and it has hung at the Alte Pinakothek museum in Munich for much of the time since then.

Gotha has been lobbying for its return since reunification in 1990.

In recent years Gotha's art detectives have had considerable success in securing the return of its lost heirlooms.

Even if the courts rule that a restoration of the Rembrandt is legally out of the question, the cultural administrators assert a kind of moral right to the picture, which does carry some force in parts of the art world.

In the end Knut Kreuch, the city's mayor, pulled enough strings to persuade Markus Söder, Bavaria's chief minister, to set the loan in motion.

The future of the painting remains unclear. One option is to make the loan permanent; another is for Gotha's Ducal Museum to share it with Munich on a rotating basis. For now, though, the city is simply glad to welcome it home.

Africans write a new story for anime

LUIS TATO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Yvonne Chockey's portrayal of Angewoman, from the Digimon anime, won her top prize at the Otamatsuri convention in Nairobi last month

A woman with eight vast white wings squeezed past a group in long wigs dressed as characters from *Sailor Moon*, the Japanese anime series about schoolgirls who transform into warriors (Jane Flanagan writes).

Julius Mokaya, a building caretaker among the colourful throng, was dressed as a manga character, a boy exiled to a rubbish dump, in a costume made from cardboard from recycling bins.

Since its first gathering in 2019 of a few dozen anime nerds, Otamatsuri has grown into a convention drawing more than 4,000 fans to Nairobi's Carnivore Grounds, a sign of how firmly Japanese animation has taken hold in Africa.

The global anime industry generated a record 3.84 trillion yen (£17.7 billion) in 2024, according to the Association of Japanese Animations, with overseas sales making up 56 per cent of it.

Even if the characters and narratives are still grounded in the original culture, their reimagining in Africa feels distinctly local. The Nigerian storyteller Roye Okapi's creation *Iyanu: Child of Wonder*, takes a typical plot of a Japanese action series — an orphan with hidden powers — and infuses it with the mythology of his own Yoruba culture.

Zambia's Tabproduction Studios has completed the country's first anime, *The Super*, which has a traditional theme of challenging authority that chimes with a generation of young Africans frustrated by the system.

Anime reached Africa first on television. *Dragon Ball Z*, a Japanese series about a warrior boy with a monkey's tail who defends the Earth in escalating tournaments of combat, ran for years in an after-school slot in South Africa. In north Africa, Japanese series arrived in Arabic.

The genre's reach goes well beyond entertainment. In Madagascar, the pirate flag of *One Piece*, whose crew defy a corrupt world government, became the symbol of last year's Gen Z protests, which helped oust the president.

Back in Nairobi, Mokaya spent months on his costume as Enjin, from the manga *Gachiakuta*. Not everyone understands the appeal. "Relatives saw what I was doing on social media and asked my father if I had joined a cult," he said.

Women's football tackles pregnancy with egg-freezing offer

Spain
David Sharrock Madrid

Spain's football federation is preparing to pay for its leading female players to freeze their eggs in an attempt to help them fit motherhood around a career at the highest level.

The Royal Spanish Football Federation is finalising an agreement with a fertility clinic that will allow members of the national team to undergo egg vitrification. The deal is expected to be announced this month.

The initiative reflects a dilemma that is gaining attention in elite women's sport. A footballer's career can extend into her thirties, but pregnancy can mean months away from training and competition, and returning to the highest level after childbirth can be difficult.

Alexia Putellas, Spain's former captain, said the national team captains had raised the matter with the federation. She welcomed the agreement as step forward.

"The federation understands that you are serving your country against your biological clock, that you cannot stop and cannot be a mother because you need your body to work," Putellas told El Pais. "The group of captains had a concern because it is very important for a player to experience World Cups, but that means that those of us who have the desire to become mothers do not find it easy to fit it in."

The move has not been popular with all female athletes. Ana Peleteiro, the Spanish Olympic triple-jumper and a mother, said that rather than being encouraged to postpone having children, athletes needed better protection during pregnancy, proper routes back into competition and access to childcare.

"The question should not be how we enable an athlete to postpone her motherhood," Peleteiro said in a video posted on Instagram. "It should be how we ensure that becoming a mother does not penalise an athlete's career."

A voluntary medical procedure could become a professional expectation, leaving athletes to adapt their reproductive lives to the demands of sport, she said.

Cristina Ouviña, a Spanish international basketball player who has won two EuroBasket titles and played for Valencia Basket, said she froze her eggs after tests showed that her ovarian reserve was low. "I was told that it might be difficult for me," she told AS, the sports newspaper. She subsequently became pregnant naturally and returned to professional basketball after giving birth.

Débora García, a footballer who has played for Valencia and Atlético Madrid, said she froze her eggs at 35 because she wanted to continue playing while preserving the possibility of becoming a mother. "I now have 11 frozen eggs, and I'm very happy," she told Cosmopolitan Espana.

World

Hong Kong activist faces life in jail

Hong Kong
Richard Lloyd Parry Asia Editor

Joshua Wong, the former child activist who became one of Hong Kong's most prominent democracy leaders, faces the possibility of life in prison after he pleaded guilty to "collusion with foreign forces" under the territory's national security law.

Wong, 29, will be sentenced at a later date for encouraging sanctions against China and Hong Kong in 2020, when the government in Beijing imposed the law that criminalises a range of peaceful activism and criticism of the authorities. He has been in detention since November 2020 after four criminal convictions, including one for subversion under the national security law.

Hong Kong activists facing criminal charges often plead guilty, not because they accept that they have done wrong, but in the hope of a reduced sentence from courts which are almost certain to convict them.

In February, the Hong Kong newspaper owner Jimmy Lai, 78, was sentenced to 20 years in prison for similar national security crimes.

VINCENT YU/AP; ANTHONY WALLACE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Joshua Wong during the umbrella protests in Hong Kong in 2015. Below, Jimmy Lai, who was jailed for 20 years in February

"The offence with which Wong is concerned is certainly serious," his lawyer, Derek Chan, told the Hong Kong High Court yesterday. "But compared with the Jimmy Lai case, which was found to be of a grave nature, this case falls just short."

Wong submitted a letter in mitigation saying that he had "reflected" on his past actions and their consequences, that he remained optimistic and believed he would one day be released to look after his elderly parents. He said he accepted that he faced a long time in prison.

"After deducting the guilty plea reduction, [the defence asks the court to] exercise exceptional mercy and give a further two-year reduction, namely imprisonment of four and a half years," Chan said.

Wong is famous in Hong Kong and well known internationally for his youth, physical slightness and his stubborn determination in insisting on the democratic rights of people in Hong Kong. At the age of 14, he organised an online petition about the low quality of school dinners and protested against plans to introduce propagandistic changes to the curriculum.

At 16, he was leading the so-called umbrella movement, the failed precursor to the 2019 round of democracy protests. At 18, he was named by The Times as its Young Person of the Year, and at 20 he was serving his first prison sentence.

Wong was also a founder member of the now dissolved political party Demosisto. In 2018, a group of US senators nominated him for the Nobel peace prize.

Wong admitted claims by the prosecutors that he encouraged international sanctions against Hong Kong and China and urged companies not to invest or do business with the authorities, a crime under the national security law.

They cited public statements by Demosisto and statements made in foreign media, in which Wong encouraged companies to stop the export of equipment to the Hong Kong police, after their suppression of the massive anti-government demonstrations in 2019.

He is serving a sentence of four years and eight months for "conspiracy to subvert state power" as part of a group that organised primaries to choose candidates in elections in Hong Kong in 2020, which is also a national security crime.

Last month, two organisers of vigils for the Tiananmen Square massacre were found guilty of subversion. Unlike Wong, Chow Hang-tung and Lee Cheuk-yan pleaded not guilty.

They were accused of having called for the overthrow of the Communist Party and an end to one-party rule in China.

Chloe Cheung, an exiled Hong Kong activist in London, said she was worried about Wong's isolation. "I think he's not in a good mental state," she told The Times.

"His parents and friends and most of colleagues have left Hong Kong so he's in prison alone.

"Someone that young has been in prison for 2,000 days. He could stay in prison until 2036, when he'll be 40 years old."

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Tycoon cleared of journalist's killing

Malta
Tom Kington

A Maltese tycoon sent to trial for the car-bomb killing of the investigative blogger Daphne Caruana Galizia in 2017 has been found not guilty in a surprise verdict that left Caruana Galizia's relatives crying in a packed court room.

After a 55-day trial and eight hours of deliberation, a jury in Valetta voted eight to one to clear Yorgen Fenech, 44, of charges of masterminding the murder of Caruana Galizia, who specialised in exposing corruption on Malta.

"Yorgen Fenech has been acquitted of Daphne's brutal assassination, nine years after she was killed, denying her the justice she deserves," Caruana Galizia's family said in a statement. "Today should have belonged to Daphne," they added.

Fenech was cleared of complicity to murder and criminal association to commit murder, prompting celebrations in court from his relatives.

Fenech's arrest in 2019 shed light on widespread political sleaze in Malta as the island became wealthy through offshore banking, the sale of EU passports and online gambling. Amid international outcry over Fenech's close ties to senior government officials, the administration led by Joseph Muscat collapsed that year.

Daphne Caruana Galizia: bomb blast

At Fenech's trial, Caruana Galizia's son, Matthew Caruana Galizia, said that before her death he was helping his mother analyse leaked emails revealing alleged corruption at a company called ElectroGas, which had won a Maltese state contract.

The firm was part-owned by Fenech, who also runs property and gambling businesses. Caruana Galizia, who was 53, was an investigative journalist with a fearsome record: in 2017 she had forced an early election in Malta with allegations linking the prime minister to the Panama Papers scandal, when millions of confidential legal documents were leaked.

Fenech was linked to the murder by a Maltese taxi driver, Melvin Theuma, who alleged that Fenech gave him €150,000 to hire three men to place a bomb under Caruana Galizia's car seat before triggering it from a yacht at sea. After they were traced to the scene the trio all confessed.

Fenech was arrested as he tried to flee Malta on his yacht. He denied wrongdoing, alleging the murder's mastermind was Keith Schembri, a former chief of staff to Muscat who had been a target of Caruana Galizia's blog. Schembri has never been placed under investigation.

Caruana Galizia's family said Fenech still faced charges of bribery in connection to ElectroGas, while he was also charged with bribing a police officer investigating his company.

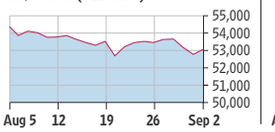
"Nine years after Daphne's brutal assassination, the institutional failures that enabled her murder remain unaddressed and unreformed," the family added.

Business

WORLD MARKETS (Change on the day)

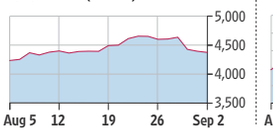
FTSE 100
10,756.45 (-32.83) ▼

Dow Jones
53,061.95 (+295.07) ▲

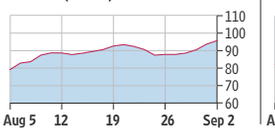


COMMODITIES

Gold
$4,374.53 (-19.38) ▼

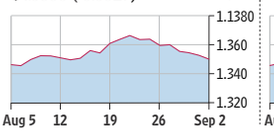


Brent crude (6pm)
$95.78 (+2.05) ▲

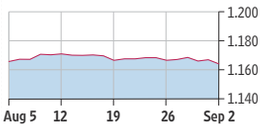


CURRENCIES

£/$
$1.3500 (-0.0027) ▼



£/€
€1.1641 (-0.0028) ▼



Blanc to quit BP board as City veteran hired to steady the ship

Ben Martin Financial Editor

Dame Amanda Blanc is to leave the board of BP after presiding over the disastrous appointment of the oil major's former chairman and playing a key role in his tumultuous defenestration.

BP said yesterday that Blanc, 59, the boss of the insurer Aviva, had decided to stand down as the energy group's senior independent director at the company's annual meeting next year.

Her impending exit comes after she was pushed into the spotlight by the controversy over Albert Manifold, who in May was removed after less than a year as BP's chairman amid allegations of bullying, claims he has called "lies".

The debacle has led to scrutiny of Blanc. She led the process that resulted in the hiring of Manifold, who did not have a background in oil and gas — having previously been chief executive of CRH, the building materials group — and was taking on his most significant non-executive role by chairing BP.

Blanc was also in the thick of Manifold's sudden exit. As senior independent director she was responsible for assessing his performance and was a key player in his removal. BP's stock exchange filing announcing Manifold's departure, which referred to "serious concerns" linked to "important governance standards, oversight and conduct", raised more questions than answers for shareholders. The bullying claims only emerged later.

The controversy at BP is a setback for Blanc, who has won plaudits for turning around Aviva. A source familiar with Blanc's decision said she wanted to focus on her day job at the insurer.

Her exit was announced alongside the appointment of Ian Tyler, BP's interim chairman, to the role permanently after a hiring process led by Blanc. Tyler said: "While I had asked Amanda to stay, she believes that after four years and having just completed the management of the chair search process, now is an appropriate time to plan her departure."

Two fund management firms with Aviva stakes previously told The Times they planned to ask Blanc how much of her time BP was consuming, although a source at the insurer insisted yesterday it had not come up in investor talks.

Tyler ends up in the chair, pages 30-31

Gas prices in Europe hit 3-year high

Fears grow over storage levels in run-up to winter

Emma Powell

Fresh strikes in the Middle East have pushed European gas prices to their highest level in more than three years, intensifying anxiety over low levels of gas storage as the UK heads into the winter.

The price of European natural gas exceeded €75 per megawatt hour in trading in the Netherlands for the first time since the start of the war in the Gulf, the most expensive since January 2023 when energy markets were still reeling from Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

The rise in gas prices raises the prospect of further increases in energy costs for households in Britain, which already face an average £60 increase in their annual bill from October after a rise in the quarterly price cap to £1,723 a year, a three-year high.

EU gas storage sites were 65 per cent full at the start of this month, down from a five-year average of 82 per cent at the same date, according to estimates from Argus Media.

Natasha Fielding, head of generation fuel pricing at Argus, said that against a backdrop of unusually low gas storage levels, "the recent restart of US-Iran fighting sets the scene for what could be Europe's most challenging winter season since the 2022 energy crisis".

Britain is particularly exposed to a sharp rise in gas prices since it has relatively little storage capacity compared with the rest of Europe and has become more reliant on competing for liquefied natural gas imports, particularly from America, since being forced to wean itself off Russian supplies.

The Rough gasfield, which is owned by Centrica, is the UK's largest gas storage facility and accounts for about 44 per cent of the country's capacity. It was closed in 2017 after Centrica concluded it could "no longer safely inject gas into the reservoir and build up the pressure in the wells" and the site was uneconomic to repair due to the poor market conditions. However, it partially reopened in 2022 after the Russian invasion of Ukraine caused gas prices to soar.

Chris O'Shea, the chief executive of Centrica, said Rough was "practically empty, as markets currently do not make it financially viable".

Facilities are typically injected with gas during the summer when prices are normally lower and discharged in the winter, when energy is more expensive.

However, the disruption to global gas markets caused by the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz has left wholesale gas prices persistently elevated and dissuaded Centrica from making any injections into the facility since the war began at the end of February.

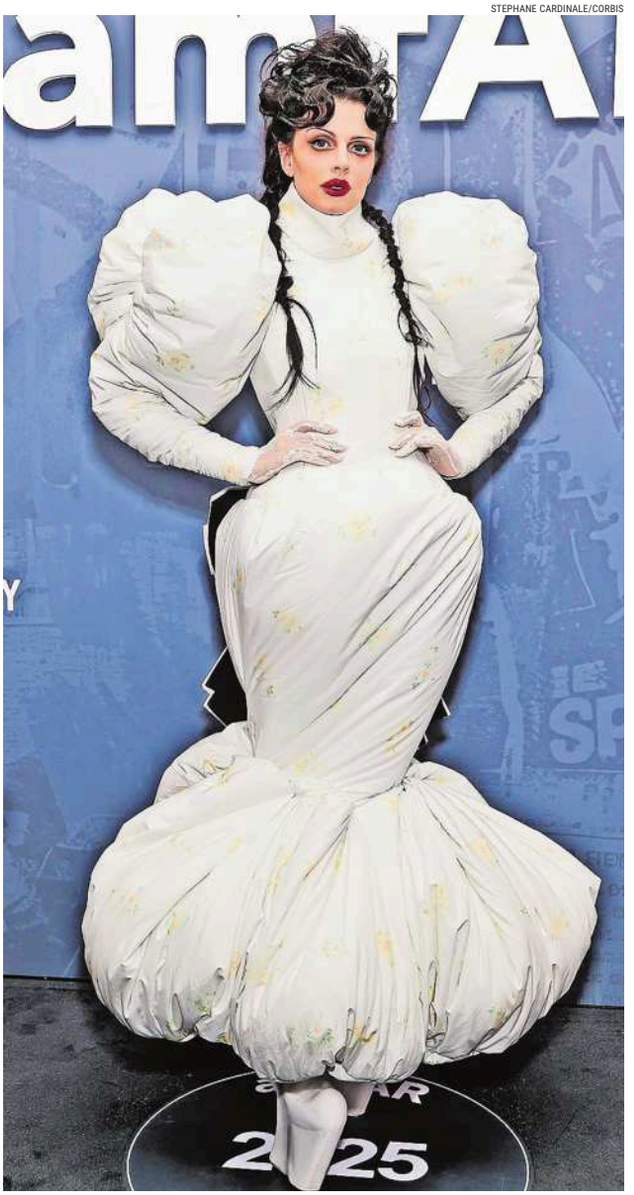
"As one of Europe's biggest gas consumers, but with some of its lowest storage capacity, we rely on expensive imported gas to heat homes and keep the lights on," O'Shea wrote in The Times.

Centrica, the owner of British Gas, has been lobbying successive governments for a deal to support the expansion of Rough. It has said the site will close by April in the absence of a deal.

Brent crude, the international oil price benchmark, rose $0.98, or 1 per cent, to $95.63 a barrel. Fears of persistent inflation and interest-rate rises have rattled global bond markets, with the yield on UK government debt on Tuesday reaching its steepest level since the 2008 financial crisis.

Lack of gas storage puts Britain's energy security at risk, Thunderer, page 20

STEPHANE CARDINALE/CORBIS



It's a wrap The actress Julia Fox at a charity gala in a gown by Marc Jacobs — the brand has been sold by LVMH, which is slimming down its portfolio Page 34

Citi fined for breaching sanctions

James Hurley

The London arm of one of Wall Street's biggest banks has been fined £4.7 million by the UK government for breaching sanctions against Russia.

A variety of failings and errors at the division of Citibank led to funds being made available to sanctioned individuals, the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI) said.

The bank, one of the biggest in the United States, enabled close to 1,000 transactions in breach of the rules.

Most of the violations occurred between February and November 2022, after the UK and western allies imposed sanctions on thousands of individuals, companies and vessels following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

OFSI, the branch of the Treasury responsible for enforcing compliance with sanctions, said Citi had voluntarily disclosed the majority of the breaches.

The regulator said many breaches arose immediately after the introduction of sanctions, which placed "significant strain on the bank's alert handling and investigation processes".

The London branch had "particularly high exposure" to potential sanctions due to its Russian client base, correspondent banking operations involving Russian institutions and payments relating to Russian affiliate AO Citibank.

Citi approved the sale of AO Citibank to Renaissance Capital last December.

In total, Citi's London branch processed 970 payments worth a combined £19.7 million, some of which were for accounts owned by state-owned shipping company PJSC Sovcomflot, while the bank also processed payments for Russian lenders Alfa-Bank, PJSC Gazprombank and Credit Bank of Moscow.

OFSI said it "does not consider there to have been any intent" to breach sanctions. "However, the errors and failings referred were, in aggregate, material and significant and they occurred across a wide range of business areas and systems within the bank."

The regulator said it recognised that

Continued on page 30

Need to know

1 Fresh strikes in the Middle East have pushed European gas prices to their highest in more than three years, raising anxiety over low levels of gas storage as the UK heads into the winter. Page 29

2 The City veteran Dame Amanda Blanc, 59, is to leave the board of BP after presiding over the disastrous appointment of the oil major's former chairman and playing a key role in his defenestration. Page 29

3 The London arm of Citibank, one of Wall Street's biggest banks, has been fined £4.7 million by the UK government for breaching Russian sanctions. Page 29

4 Andy Burnham, the prime minister, must try to rein in the "excesses" of government spending, such as the triple lock and welfare expenditure, Lord O'Neill of Gatley, one of his former economic advisers, has told Times Radio. Page 32

5 Ryanair, Europe's busiest short-haul carrier, has scaled back its winter schedule to mitigate seasonal losses, warning that rising fuel costs threaten the solvency of less resilient airlines. Pages 34-35

6 Volkswagen, Europe's largest carmaker, is heading for a breakdown in relations with its workforce after it emerged that the German automotive group's chief executive may try to force through 100,000 redundancies and four factory closures. Page 35

7 Vodafone is set to follow its telecommunications rivals in launching a pay-television service in the UK, as it attempts to accelerate its growth in the ultra-competitive broadband market. Page 37

8 The City regulator has been urged to investigate Barclays' relationship with a collapsed mortgage lender at the centre of an alleged £1.3 billion fraud. Investors in Market Financial Solutions have written to the Financial Conduct Authority to request an investigation into Barclays' conduct as "MFS's corporate bank and one of its largest institutional lenders". Page 39

"There are still many reasons to be bullish about the value of a university degree

Louisa Clarence-Smith, page 33

For expert business analysis subscribe to the business newsletter thetimes.com/newsletters

Tyler ends up in the chair

Ben Martin Financial Editor

The stopgap chairman of BP has been appointed to lead the board permanently as the oil major seeks to steady the ship after the ousting of Albert Manifold.

Ian Tyler, 66, has been in the chair on an interim basis since May, when BP was thrown into upheaval by the board's decision to abruptly remove Manifold. Later allegations of bullying have been strongly denied by Manifold.

The FTSE 100 oil company said yesterday that after an "extensive search process" for a new chairman led by Dame Amanda Blanc, the group's senior independent director, it had decided to give the job to Tyler. It also revealed that Blanc, who had played a central role in the Manifold affair, had resolved to stand down from the board at its next annual meeting in 2027.

The shake-up is the latest in a series of changes at the top of BP that have led to strategic pivots at one of Britain's biggest companies.

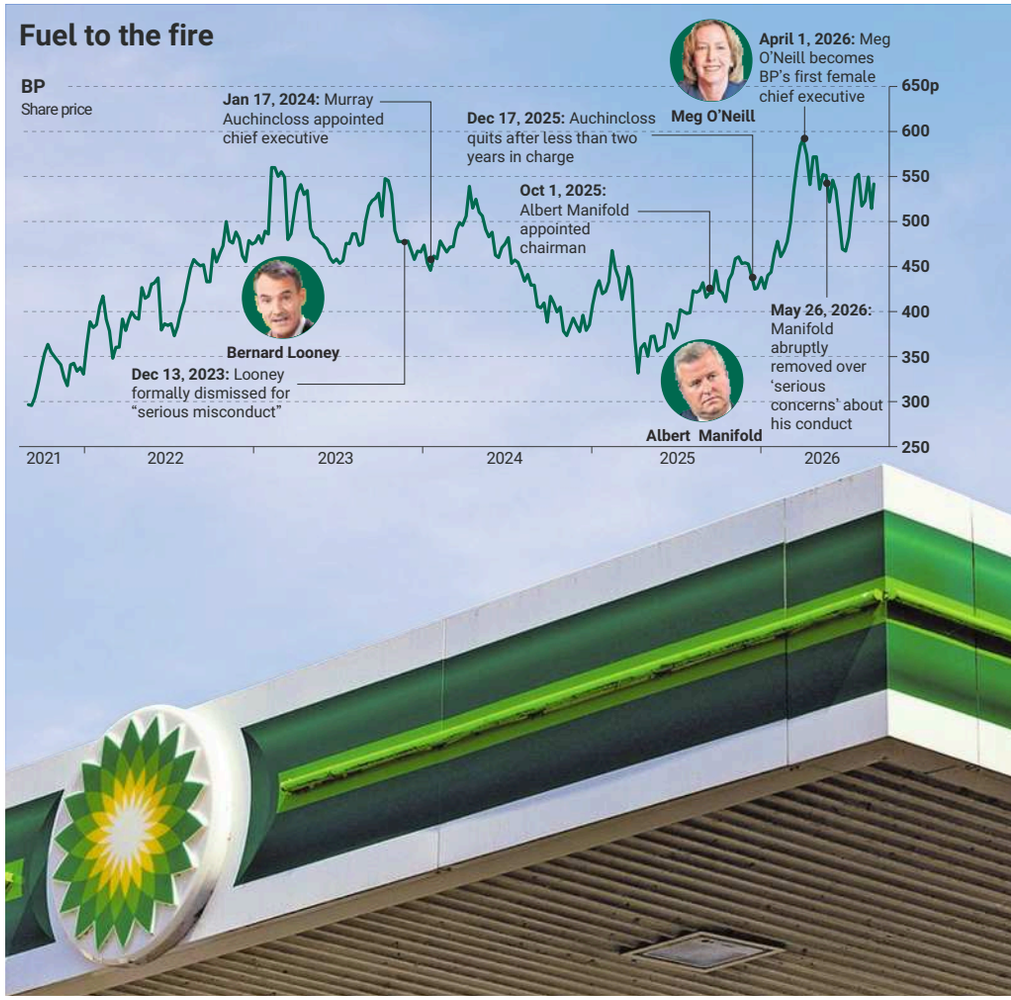
The oil major has had four chief executives since the turn of the decade — including Meg O'Neill, who only took charge in April — and is now on its third chairman in less than a year.

It also frustrated shareholders by unsuccessfully shifting its focus to greener forms of energy under Bernard Looney, who took over from Bob Dudley as BP's chief executive in 2020, only to perform a swift U-turn and switch back to increasing oil and gas production under Murray Auchincloss, a move that O'Neill moved quickly to double down on. Its woes have attracted the attention of Elliott, a US activist hedge fund that emerged as a significant BP shareholder last year.

Auchincloss, who had previously been BP's finance chief, succeeded Looney after the latter left in 2023, when he was found to have committed "serious misconduct" for failing to disclose relationships with colleagues.

Auchincloss himself also suddenly exited the business after less than two years as chief executive last December, when Manifold said that "increased rigour and diligence" were needed "to make the necessary transformative changes to maximise value for our shareholders".

The acrimonious departure of Manifold led to further uncertainty for the oil company's shareholders by stoking more boardroom turmoil. Drawing a line under all of this will be a priority for Tyler, who joined BP as a non-executive in April last year and is a former chief executive of Balfour Beatty, the construction company.



Tyler said: "I will lead the board's evolution, ensuring we have the depth, experience and capabilities needed to support the company's strategic priorities and long-term value creation.

"I am committed to establishing regular and transparent engagement with our shareholders, while continuing to support the wider leadership team as they deliver the performance and value our shareholders rightfully expect."

BP shares edged up 1¼p, or 0.2 per cent, to close at 542½p. One institutional investor in the oil major told The Times: "What BP needs now, after the year it has just had, is some stability, which hopefully this achieves."

Analysts at Barclays said Tyler's comments on shareholder engagement were "a welcome and overdue step" given "investor frustration with recent board decision-making".

However, analysts at Peel Hunt, another stockbroker, argued that Tyler's appointment was "hardly a bold decision and suggests the board is not willing to address the toxic board culture at the firm".

The Australasian Centre for Corporate Responsibility, a shareholder advocacy group that has been active at BP, also said Blanc's forthcoming exit "will still have investors wondering if and when there will be a proper post-mortem from the Manifold affair".

Blanc, who is also chief executive of the insurer Aviva, led the search process that culminated in Manifold's appointment and was also deeply involved in his removal. Manifold has since embarked on a war of words with BP and has hired the law firm Mishcon de Reya to represent him. A spokesman for Manifold said he was not commenting on the board changes.

Cook's $47m bite of Apple in new role

Chris Dorrell

Tim Cook has been awarded a pay package worth $47 million as he assumes his new role as Apple's executive chairman.

He will be paid a base salary of $2 million alongside $45 million worth of shares, which almost matches the amount awarded to John Ternus, his successor as chief executive. Half of Cook's share awards depend on meeting performance targets, while the other half will be paid over four years.

Ternus, who took over from Cook on Tuesday, will receive a base salary of $3 million plus a share award worth $52 million, regulatory filings show.

Apple's value grew by trillions of dollars during Cook's tenure, which began in 2011. The company's market capitalisation has increased to $4.7 trillion from about $350 billion, equivalent to adding $32 million in value for every hour that Cook has been in charge, according to Bank of America.

He is likely to remain an influential figure at the company. Apple said he will "assist with certain aspects of the company, including engaging with policymakers around the world".

In his time as chief executive, Cook had to navigate the deteriorating relationship between the US and China, while investing heavily in the world's second-largest economy. About 80 per cent of Apple's products are assembled in China even though the company has tried to diversify its supply chain in India and Vietnam.

Analysts expect Ternus to place more emphasis on developing new products in an attempt to reduce the company's reliance on the iPhone.

Whereas Cook's background was in supply chains, Ternus has worked in Apple's hardware division since 2013, and was behind major product launches like the Apple Watch and AirPods.

In a memo to employees, Cook said: "I take enormous comfort in handing the helm to someone as brilliant and wonderful and capable as John. Few people understand what it takes to build products that change the world the way John does and I could not be more excited for his leadership."

Ternus's first major set-piece will be next week's long-awaited release of the foldable iPhone. The company has been researching foldable technologies for years, but production timelines have been repeatedly delayed.

He said he was excited about "incredible products already in the works and the ones we haven't even imagined yet".

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29

Citi fine second largest ever

firms with exposure to Russia faced "significant operational challenges" in complying with sanctions but said the violations by Citi still warranted the fine, the second-largest since the office was launched. Standard Chartered was fined £20 million in 2020 for loans to a DenizBank in Turkey, which was majority owned by Russia's Sberbank and subject to EU and UK sanctions.

An aggravating factor in the latest case was that "Citi breached its obligations to report frozen assets to OFSI as soon as practicable" on 53 occasions.

A spokeswoman for Citi said the London branch "proactively engaged with OFSI and co-operated throughout its investigation" and was "pleased to conclude this matter".

"Citi takes sanctions compliance extremely seriously and continues to invest significantly in its global sanctions compliance framework," she said.

as music stops at BP

What's in the in-tray

Helping to restore the confidence of BP's beleaguered stock-market investors will be at the top of Ian Tyler's to-do list.

BP's shareholder register includes the activist hedge fund Elliott, an aggressive American firm that Tyler has experience of, thanks to his role as senior independent director of Anglo American: Elliott disclosed a stake in Anglo in 2024.

Meg O'Neill, the new chief executive, who was previously the boss of Woodside Energy, is seeking to overhaul BP, including by putting its North Sea business up for sale.

She is also seeking a buyer for BP's US biogas business, one of the largest green investments it made as part of its failed renewables push.

Profile

Ian Tyler once said he was "not sure anything else would be as interesting or complex or challenging" as running Balfour Beatty. Thirteen years after leaving the construction group and now chairman of the troubled BP, he has probably found an equally demanding test.

Best known in the City for his eight-year stint as Balfour's chief executive, he has since garnered considerable experience as a non-executive, including as a former director of BAE Systems, the defence group, and his previous chairman roles at Vistry, which is one of Britain's biggest housebuilders, the oil company Cairn Energy, Affinity Water and Al Noor Hospitals.

He is also currently chairman of Grafton, the FTSE 250 builders merchants, and the senior independent director at Anglo American, the FTSE 100 miner, although BP said Tyler "will review his existing board commitments to ensure that he can devote the appropriate time and attention to the company".

Stuart Chambers, the chairman of Anglo, where Tyler has been a board member since 2022, said he could "absolutely see why BP has seen fit to appoint Ian as chair".

"He has all the City and shareholder experience combined with a deep sense of pragmatism, and he does an outstanding job for us on the Anglo American board."

He is also a known quantity both to the rest of the BP board, including its new chief executive Meg O'Neill, who backed the removal of Albert Manifold as BP's chairman in May, and the oil major's shareholders, having been a non-exec there since April last year and latterly its interim chairman.

A chartered accountant who qualified with Arthur Andersen in 1985, he joined Balfour in 1996 as its finance director, becoming its chief operating officer in 2002 and then chief executive in 2005.

His tenure included expanding Balfour overseas but when he left in 2013 the company had recently sounded a profit warning, which became the first in a series of profit alerts after Tyler had gone that cost his successor, Andrew McNaughton, his job, and cast a shadow over Tyler's legacy as chief executive.

Poundland could be sold 'in weeks'

Guy Taylor

The discount chain Poundland could be sold within weeks as its owners race to find a new buyer before the busy Christmas trading period.

Advisers from Alvarez & Marsal formally kicked off the sale process yesterday after their appointment by Gordon Brothers, the investment firm that bought Poundland for £1 last year.

Sources said the auction was being conducted swiftly to avoid distraction over Christmas, the busiest time of year for many retailers. Poundland's suitors reportedly include Modella Capital, the controversial private equity firm which recently secured approval for an aggressive restructuring of WH Smith's former high street business.

There are understood to be several other interested parties, with bids expected to be tabled as early as next month, according to Sky News, which first reported the development.

After acquiring the business from Pepco Group, Gordon Brothers secured approval for a turnaround which resulted in the closure of about a fifth of its stores and the loss of more than 2,000 jobs. Efforts to revive its fortunes have included simplifying ranges , cutting prices and restoring its £1 price point to about half its offer.

Over the first nine months of the current fiscal year, Poundland reported positive earnings before interest, taxation, depreciation and amortisation (ebitda), about £70 million ahead of last year and in line with expectations.

However, its latest accounts covering the year ending September 2025 show that a "material uncertainty" hangs over its future unless more funding is secured before the expiry of a £30 million loan facility from Gordon Brothers next August. Pre-tax losses in the year of its sale nearly doubled to £85.2 million, while revenues fell to about £1.6 billion from £1.8 billion.

Interest from Modella may also raise concerns given the firm's record with distressed retailers. Thousands of jobs were lost after Claire's and The Original Factory shop collapsed into insolvency in January under its ownership. Modella has declined to comment on the speculation surrounding Poundland, which operates about 600 stores and employs some 12,000 people in the UK.

Poundland said: "We're not going to be distracted from the successful recovery we're putting in place through good old-fashioned back-to-basics retailing."

Gordon Brothers has been approached for comment.

Blanc space in oil giant's soap opera

BUSINESS COMMENTARY *Alistair Osborne*

Anything for a quiet life. Over the past three years, the world famous UK oil company, Beyond Parody, has rolled out a barrel of boardroom delights.

Who can forget this sort of stuff? First, the sacking of its "performing while transforming" ex-chief executive, Bernard Looney: a fellow hoofed out after failing to give the board the full lowdown on his in-house shagathon. (Honestly, the things boards expect nowadays.) It led to a "no orgy" policy, overseen by another BP, the Bonking Police, where senior bods had to 'fess up to "all intimate work relationships ... over the past three years". Who knows if the numbers even tallied.

Then came his successor Murray Auchincloss — an over-promoted finance chief and disciple of Looney's green revolution — to produce a strategic funk. How? By reverse-ferreting unconvincingly back into fossil fuels. Come April 2025, the man who had appointed both of them, the then chairman Helge Lund, was also on his way out on a tailwind from irate investors, including the hedge fund Elliott.

Still, guess what? All that was just the warm-up act. Ingeniously, BP decided the ideal successor for Lund was a lifer boss from Irish building materials outfit CRH with no oil or company chairman experience: Albert Manifold. He wisely got shot of Auchincloss, hiring new boss Meg O'Neill. But only before another blow-up — of himself. In May, he was summarily "removed" after just eight months — and only two after O'Neill took charge — over bullying claims that he denies. His interim replacement? Non-exec Ian Tyler.

Pivotal to much of this was Amanda Blanc, the Aviva chief, who in four years is now on to chairman and chief executive No3. She joined the BP board in September 2022, becoming senior independent director in April 2024. And, as such, she led the search for Manifold. She called him the "ideal candidate": a view that unravelled embarrassingly in claims about his volcanic temper and public dressing-downs. As for Manifold, he's called the claims"lies", though his threatened legal action is yet to arrive. If he's serious, why the wait? Imagine the bill his lawyer Mishcon de Reya is clocking up.

So, anyway, after all that, you sort of get what Blanc, again in charge of the chairman search, and the rest of the BP board have now decided: that the stand-in Tyler, a non-exec since April 2025, should be stood in permanently. Sure, he's not exactly the heavy-hitter a business valued at £85 billion typically gets. But why rock the boat? So far he's working nicely with O'Neill, with no one alleging any bullying. Blanc said he's "secured the confidence of the board and executive management through his considered leadership, judgment and integrity".

It does look a bit of an easy way out. And not least for Blanc who's been itching to extract herself from the BP soap opera for ages and can now step down at next April's AGM.

Sure, Tyler, an ex-Balfour Beatty boss, has heaps of board experience, spanning "more than 15 chief executives" even if sometimes with mixed results: appointing Greg Fitzgerald at Vistry, say. His present jobs also include Manifold's building materials trade — he chairs Grafton — as well as senior independent director at miner Anglo-American. Its chairman Stuart Chambers said Tyler does an "outstanding job", bringing a "deep sense of pragmatism". For a BP chair, one of those two jobs will have to go.

Tyler has his credentials, then. But, while the shares barely moved — up 0.2 per cent to 542½p — not everyone was convinced. Panmure Liberum analysts said he was "hardly a bold decision and suggests the board is not willing to address the toxic board culture at the firm", while calling Blanc's exit "a positive".

Maybe that's a bit harsh, though a heavyweight replacement for Blanc is now essential because Tyler looks almost like an O'Neill appointee. Indeed, after this cosy selection, an outsider's perspective is required. Ditto a period of boardroom calm. If Tyler can deliver that, he won't look such an underwhelming choice.

TT races back

Maybe DBay Advisors was right after all. Rewind to last Christmas and the then 24.5 per cent shareholder in TT Electronics was proving itself a right grinch: blocking a recommended 150p-a-share bid from Swiss-listed Cicor that other investors wanted, valuing the business at £277 million. "Unattractive", DBay called it.

At the time, people thought DBay's real game was to watch the shares collapse and then come back with a low-ball bid. Yet, maybe, it just had a finer appreciation of TT's value, as the half-year figures have underlined. The turnaround under chief executive Eric Lakin is starting to deliver, with adjusted organic operating profits up 37 per cent to £18.5 million and TT upping full-year forecasts. The shares? Up 11 per cent to 149½p, just shy of the bid price, as analysts lifted estimates by £5 million to about £40 million.

Lakin, in charge since April 2025, says he saw the failed bid as a "call to arms": the cue to stop the profits warnings, "not slip on banana skins", cut costs, sort out the components wing and focus on sales growth. The results of that include a Rolls-Royce aircraft engine contract and a components division now in good enough shape to sell, with Lakin fielding "expressions of interest".

As for DBay, it now has 29 per cent. And who knows its next move. But Berenberg analysts have raised their TT target price to £2. Tricky now to take it private on the cheap.

Flight risk

Book your Christmas flights early. If Ryanair, Europe's lowest-cost, best-hedged airline is cutting capacity this winter in the face of rising fuel costs, it's hard to see how weaker rivals won't follow suit. It won't only be Michael O'Leary who believes short-haul air fares may "increase materially".

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Business

Tackle triple lock to calm bond market, says O'Neill

Jack Barnett Economics Correspondent

Andy Burnham must try to rein in the "excesses" of government spending, such as the triple lock and welfare expenditure, one of his former economic advisers told Times Radio yesterday.

Lord O'Neill of Gatley, who advised the prime minister about economic affairs as he prepared to enter No 10 but turned down a position in his administration, said Burnham must tackle the "sacred cows" of public spending amid warnings that a global bond market rout has halved UK fiscal headroom.

The former Goldman Sachs economist said that bond markets would respond favourably if the prime minister were "to take credible action to deal with the excesses of the triple lock or the excesses of welfare spending".

He said that there had been a "been a denial from all sorts of governments" in recent years about the parlous state of the public finances. Previous administrations had lived "in a world where none of these things seems to be real", he added.

UK government borrowing costs reached their highest level since the 2008 global financial crisis this week amid renewed concerns about rising inflation and interest rates after the US and Iran traded missile strikes for the first time since July.

5.23%
Yield on UK ten-year Gilt
Source: UK Debt Management Office

Yields were broadly stable yesterday as Burnham took his first prime minister's questions session in the Commons in which he was pressed by Kemi Badenoch, the Tory leader, on whether the budget on October 28 would include tax rises.

The prime minister responded that he had already launched VAT cuts on electricity bills and tax cuts for pubs in his first weeks in the job, adding that he would not "write the budget" at the despatch box.

Burnham also noted that he and O'Neill did "not always agree" during their time working together while he was mayor of Greater Manchester.

However, O'Neill has been increasingly vocal in recent weeks about the need for the prime minister and his chancellor, John Healey, to grasp the nettle of government spending.

Talking to Times Radio, O'Neill said: "If you have the markets carrying on doing what they're doing globally ... eventually they're going to have absolutely no choice [but to cut spending] because the penalty of the debt servicing cost and the knock-on effect to other markets including mortgage rates will be too severe for a government to resist."

TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER RICHARD POHLE

Lord O'Neill of Gatley, said Andy Burnham must tackle the "sacred cows" of public spending including state pensions

Economists at the Resolution Foundation, a left-leaning think tank, have calculated that tying the pension triple lock to earnings growth could save nearly £10 billion.

Under the present policy, first announced by the coalition government in 2010, the state pension rises by whichever is greatest out of inflation, earnings, or 2.5 per cent every year.

According to the Office for Budget Responsibility, total government welfare spending is on track to exceed £400 billion by the early 2030s, up by more than £70 billion compared with the current fiscal year, nearly half of which comes from pension benefit spending and a quarter from universal credit expenditure.

The tax burden — expressed as tax revenues as a share of GDP — is on track for a post-Second World War high, while public spending is forecast to peak at 44.9 per cent of GDP.

Yesterday, there was a pause in the global bond rout that had taken yields to multi-decade highs. The yield on the benchmark ten-year UK government bond edged down by 0.01 percentage points to 5.23 per cent and the yield on the 30-year UK bond, or gilt, dipped by a similar degree to 5.87 per cent. Both were marginally higher earlier in the day. Yields move inversely to prices.

Over the past month, the yield on the ten-year gilt is up by more than 0.20 percentage points, which has prompted economists to warn that the UK's fiscal headroom may have halved from the near-£24 billion left over by former chancellor Rachel Reeves after the March spring statement.

Plans put in action by Reeves are expected to reduce the UK's deficit as a share of GDP at the quickest pace in the G7 in the coming years.

Household and business confidence improving

Mehreen Khan Economics Editor

British households and businesses are more optimistic about the economy and their finances, a survey has found.

A monthly measure of consumer confidence gained 0.9 points in August to 106.4, according to YouGov and the Centre for Economics and Business Research, suggesting household and business sentiment is improving.

The index hit a post-pandemic peak in 2025 and has fallen since the US-Iran war in late February. August was the first full month since Andy Burnham became prime minister.

Surveyed consumers reported a better outlook over the past month and over the next 12 months. The responses are often an indicator for future spending intentions and consumption.

Business activity measures also rose in August, up to 107.8 from 104.9 for the past 30 days, and rising to 117.7 from 115.2 for the 12 months ahead. Any figure above 100 is a positive score.

Sam Miley, head of forecasting and thought leadership at Cebr, said the survey's increase was "broad based".

"The business-activity components were the main drivers, off the back of data showing robust growth in the first half of the year. The metric is also showing ongoing momentum. Not since 2024 has confidence recorded such an extended sequence of improvement.

"There do remain headwinds, however, notably from inflation and continued geopolitical uncertainty."

Workers reported a decline in their immediate job security last month. The short-term measure for job security fell to 91.5 from 92.3, and the forward looking measure for employment rose to 117.3 from 116.1. Any figure below 100 points to negative overall sentiment.

The survey is carried out with 6,000 respondents answering questions about household finances, property prices, job security and business activity and give their forecast for the year.

Separately, PwC, a professional services firm, found spending power in the North East and North West over 6 per cent below the national average, equivalent to £1,500 in disposable income.

Households in the South East have spending power 9 per cent above average, adding £2,154 a year. Of the capital's 32 boroughs, 14 also fell below the national average for spending power

Rachel Taylor, government and health industries leader at PwC, said: "The research shows just how differently prosperity is experienced across the UK, with stark variations not only between regions but on each other's doorstep."

Named and shamed: firms paying less than minimum wage

Jessica Newman
Leisure Industries Correspondent

Five Guys and B&Q are among more than 650 businesses that have been "named and shamed" by the government for failing to pay some of their employees the minimum wage.

The Department for Business & Trade has released a list of 658 employers who have now paid a total of £4 million to more than 27,000 workers following "robust" enforcement action.

Ministers said they have issued penalties totalling £7 million to employers found not to be paying the legal minimum wage. Jonathan Reynolds, the business and trade secretary, said: "Short-changing your staff isn't a shortcut to success and we are determined to stamp it out."

The government said it was committed to publishing naming lists more regularly so that employers were swiftly held to account and made improvements as quickly as possible.

Kate Dearden, minister for the future of work, said: "Underpaying your staff is illegal, and we will not let workers foot the bill for their bosses failing to follow the rules. We're making sure workers get the pay they deserve, and where employers fall short, they will be held to account."

The minimum age, or national living wage as it is known for those who are 21 and over, was introduced more than 20 years ago at £7.20 an hour and rose to £12.71 an hour in April.

B&Q, the DIY retailer, was at the top of the list for failing to pay 4,530 workers correctly, owing them a total of £456,934. The company said the shortfalls in payments were "unintentional" and "related to calculations involving geographical allowances which are paid in addition to minimum hourly rates". The affected employees were paid in full in July last year, the company added.

Five Guys, the burger chain, was on the list for underpaying almost 3,700 of its workers a total of £54,642.

"Following an HMRC review, technical differences in how payroll regulations were applied affected our national minimum wage calculations, resulting in a shortfall of approximately £55,000 across a payroll of more than £330 million," the company said, adding that it has paid all current and former staff that were affected.

Serco was also on the list, underpaying 374 staff a total of £36,303. A spokesman for the outsourcer, which provides services to asylum hotels, defence programmes, hospitals, schools, offices and prisons, blamed the shortfall on a technical error that affected one contract more than two years ago and related to salary-sacrifice schemes.

"It was quickly rectified once identified and all employees were reimbursed in full," Serco said.

Whitbread, the owner of the Premier Inn hotel chain, also appeared on the list after it failed to pay 342 employees a total of £4,193. The FTSE 100 company blamed the shortfall on an administrative error which has been rectified.

Louisa Clarence-Smith

Don't listen to tech leaders, university does equip you for the world of AI

The millions of students starting an undergraduate degree this autumn could be forgiven for wondering whether they should be training instead to become an electrician or a plumber.

Jensen Huang, chief executive of Nvidia, said this year that he was seeing "six-figure salaries for people who are building chip factories or computer factories or AI factories".

Trade workers' salaries have doubled for some roles owing to a surge in demand for skilled professionals to support the largest infrastructure buildout in history. "Everybody should be able to make a great living," Huang said. "You don't need to have a PhD in computer science to do so."

Dina Powell McCormick, president of Meta Platforms, which is one of the biggest investors in AI infrastructure, has urged Americans to "move past" the idea that "the American Dream is the college you got into or go to".

She told the Milken conference in Los Angeles in May: "The American Dream is getting a job, getting a home, fulfilling your children's potential, and I think there is great honour in what we describe as America's workforce. If this is an American race, and if our race is with China, then these welders, electricians, construction workers are doing the same thing [as] many of the women who came together in World War Two to support our troops and to help build what we needed to win World War Two."

Meanwhile, scare stories about the cost of higher education and a fiercely competitive job market abound. An analysis by The Economist found that the rate of full-time employment for recent college graduates fell from nearly 70 per cent to 55 per cent in the three years after ChatGPT's release in 2022.

However, as the AI revolution plays out, there are several reasons to be more bullish on the value of a university degree.

Dina Powell McCormick, of Meta, wants more welders and electricians

There is a growing recognition among business leaders that in the longer term, many of the human skills that students are likely to hone at university, including critical thinking, emotional intelligence and social skills, will be needed by workers seeking to protect their careers as AI and AI-powered robots take over more menial tasks.

Jamie Dimon, chief executive of JPMorgan Chase, said last year his advice to those fearful of losing their jobs to AI was to improve their critical thinking and EQ, or learn "how to be good in a meeting, how to communicate, how to write". Then, "you'll have plenty of jobs", he said.

While Elon Musk is among tech leaders to have cast doubt on the value of a university education, Valerie Capers Workman, his former vice-president of people at Tesla, declared this year that a degree was "more valuable today than it has ever been". She told a conference in California that skills such as the ability to reason, question, and lead with humanity would be sought-after because machines would never have those qualities. Liberal arts degrees were becoming particularly valuable, she added. "Do not let anyone, not a tech founder, not a headline, not a podcast host, convince you that your education was a waste," she said in a message to recent graduates.

The irony of some tech leaders urging young people to consider an alternative to a university degree is that many of those entrepreneurs had life-changing encounters as students, including meeting co-founders or mentors at university who were instrumental to their later success. Today's tech titans have themselves documented forming long-lasting and fateful friendships between people from different backgrounds that I would wager you are more likely to form on a freshman campus surrounded by thousands of people your age than on a factory floor.

Lee Elliot Major, professor of social mobility at the University of Exeter, said: "There's a danger of developing a new class divide in education: university, networks and advanced study for the advantaged, while other young people are told to get a job and learn a trade. University is about much more than the salary premium attached to a degree: at its best it expands horizons and creates friendships, confidence and networks that can shape the rest of your life."

He added: "We absolutely need to elevate technical and vocational routes, but parity of opportunity matters more than parity of esteem. Different routes must offer genuinely comparable opportunities to learn, progress and flourish. The fairness test is whether we would be equally happy for our own children to take each route."

David Deming, an economist and the Danoff dean of Harvard, said it had been historically the case in the US that the average earnings difference between somebody with a college degree and somebody without a degree could be minimal soon after graduation. However, that differential doubled over the course of someone's career in favour of the graduate.

"I think when people are looking at the lukewarm job market for college grads right now, it's just important to say that this is not actually the time when a degree has historically paid off anyway," he added. "You really have to look in the distance to see."

He said he was sceptical that AI would diminish the value of a degree because a university education should give students a general skillset that allowed them to pivot as technology evolved. "Sometimes you see that people take a few years to find their footing, but turn out being a good writer, being decent at math, being able to work well with others, manage yourself, and be a part of a team," he said. "These are things that are valuable in a lot of adult life and in a lot of jobs."

Influential business leaders should be wary of telling young people they no longer need the experiences and networks that they benefited from, and which are likely to be assets they carry with them throughout their careers in the age of advanced AI.

Louisa Clarence-Smith is US Business Editor of The Times

Ryan Bourne

Westminster stifles entrepreneurs before they can hire anyone

Britain's most politically neglected businesses employ nobody, pay no tax and cannot belong to any trade association. They do not attend Downing Street summits, hire lobbyists or bend a minister's ear. In fact, they can't, because they don't exist, smothered at the inspiration stage by various regulations that either prevent entry or make it too costly.

When governments "listen to business," they naturally call on big banks, supermarkets, retailers, energy companies, housebuilders, and manufacturers. They meet associations such as the CBI or the Federation of Small Businesses. All stakeholders with interests. Yet what is pro-business is not always pro-market. Incumbents may want protection from competition, whereas competitive markets depend on exposing them to it.

A recent paper from the US suggests legislators' backgrounds can support the interests of unborn firms. The researchers linked financial disclosures from elected politicians in 26 states with the legislation they championed between 2009 and 2023. More than two fifths of these lawmakers were entrepreneurs owning and actively managing businesses.

Entrepreneur politicians did not initiate more legislation and were no more likely to endorse "pro-business" legislation than others. They were, however, likelier to sponsor "pro-entry" proposals such as reducing licensing, registration and regulatory barriers. Having confronted the obstacles to starting firms, in other words, they were alert to how government makes start-ups' lives more difficult.

The Commons has scant founders' experience to push that agenda here. Kemi Badenoch complained that 90 per cent of new Labour MPs came from trade unions, charities or the public sector, with barely a fifth of the Cabinet holding any private-sector experience. Her new shadow chancellor, Andrew Griffith, spent over 25 years in business, as Sky's chief financial and operating officer and chairing Just Eat. One post-reshuffle jibe was that he has about the same years of private sector experience as the entire Cabinet.

Separately, the Great British Think Tank calculates that less than a third of MPs come from business, finance, consulting, science and technology, trades or farming — what it calls the "private economy" — in contrast to politics, lobbying, charities, journalism and the public sector. The party divide is stark. Just 16 per cent of Labour MPs come from those private sectors, compared with about half of Tory and Reform MPs and 45 per cent of Liberal Democrats.

My trawling of MPs' biographies and interests to find those who founded, owned and managed a commercial venture, rather than working as an employee, or setting up a company to manage speech, book, consultancy, and property earnings, suggests low numbers.

Around 60 of 650 elected MPs, including Sir Jeremy Hunt, Richard Tice, Steff Aquarone and Angus McDonald, would meet that tight entrepreneur criterion. Broaden it to include legal practices, sole traders, social enterprises, or running a family-owned business, and you're talking about 100 MPs. One can quibble on specific categorisations. What's clear, however, is that Westminster has nothing resembling the entrepreneurial representation found in American state legislatures.

Which is perhaps unsurprising, given parliament is more of a full-time gig and a relatively low paid one. Yet the fact that so few have entrepreneurial backgrounds is bound to affect economic policy in subtle ways. A would-be housebuilder benefits more from planning reform than investment summits. A first-time employer would prefer simpler taxes to a government grant portal. A founder would prefer a regulatory sandbox to test a product before bearing full compliance costs, whereas established manufacturers may prefer industrial policy and protectionism.

Parliament teems with champions for workers, regions, constituencies and established industries. Entrepreneurs might not be better legislators overall, but having more of them might force Westminster to reckon with the rules that make markets less contestable.

Ryan Bourne is an economist at the Cato Institute and editor of the book The War on Prices

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Business

LVMH sheds Marc Jacobs brand with $925m sale

Modupe Omitola

LVMH has completed the $925 million sale of Marc Jacobs to a joint venture between WHP Global and G-III in its fifth divestment since the slowdown in luxury sales following the pandemic.

The world's largest luxury goods conglomerate announced the sale of the beauty brand in May as part of its strategy to slim down its portfolio.

WHP Global, which manages 16 brands including Vera Wang and G-Star, and G-III, an American clothing company, each paid $425 million for 50 per cent of Marc Jacobs, below the $1billion that LVMH was originally seeking. G-III also purchased the company's operating business, which includes more than 100 shops centred on the United States and Europe, to push its total investment up by $75 million.

Of the eight properties that LVMH has sold since it was formed in 1987, five have been completed since 2020. The group sold its controlling stake in the clothing brand Off-White to Bluestar Alliance in 2024 and in January sold its minority stake in Stella McCartney back to the founder.

LVMH has suffered in the global luxury slowdown. Shares in the group have fallen 31.6 per cent to €439 since the start of the year. Growth in its fashion and leather goods sales rose 1 per cent to €8.9 billion in the second quarter of this year. Although this was the first quarter of growth in two years, it missed analysts' expectations of growth of 1.7 per cent.

Marc Jacobs will remain as creative director and Eric Marechalle, who was appointed in 2017, will remain as chief executive. Yehuda Shmidman, chief executive of WHP, said: "The basic plan is no changes [to leadership]. The basic plan is to layer on growth."

Jacobs said he was hopeful the future would include a more robust "democratic and commercial offering" for the brand, particularly in ready-to-wear, which has already proved successful. LVMH said Marc Jacobs had enjoyed success with its Heaven line, targeted at Gen Z, and growth in lower-cost retail such as accessories and sportswear.

Ryanair cuts winter seats as jet fuel price soars

Robert Lea

Ryanair has scaled back its winter schedule to mitigate seasonal losses, warning that rising fuel costs threaten the solvency of less-resilient airlines.

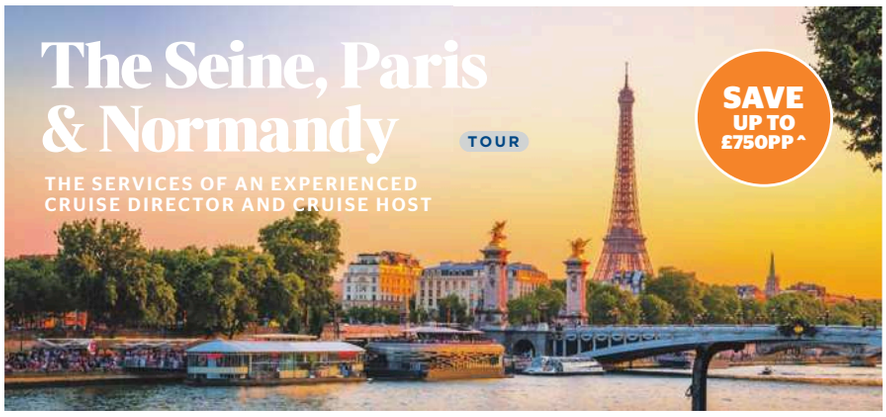
Europe's busiest short-haul carrier said: "If high oil prices continue through to summer 2027, Ryanair believes short-haul airfares in Europe will increase materially to reflect higher oil prices as some less well-hedged competitors will struggle to maintain capacity or even survive this coming winter season."

Ryanair is reducing its schedules as fuel costs rise again following the resumption of hostilities in the Gulf, and subsequent blockades of oil and gas routes. Brent crude has climbed back above $90 a barrel.

The airline reported that it has hedged — or price-locked — 80 per cent of its jet fuel supplies at about $67 a barrel through to next spring. However, it has admitted that the other 20 per cent of jet fuel to be acquired is available only at prohibitive prices. It is currently fetching about $140 a barrel on the spot market. It said: "In light of [this] ... it is sensible to reduce the group's exposure to unhedged jet fuel during the unprofitable winter schedule."

For Ryanair, that means it will not carry as many passengers in its financial year to the end of next March as it had previously signalled, cutting its estimate from 216 million passengers to 214 million. Reining back its winter services will reduce the winter losses from about €170 million to an estimated €100 million.

Its full financial year outturn will still be lower than the €2.26 billion reported



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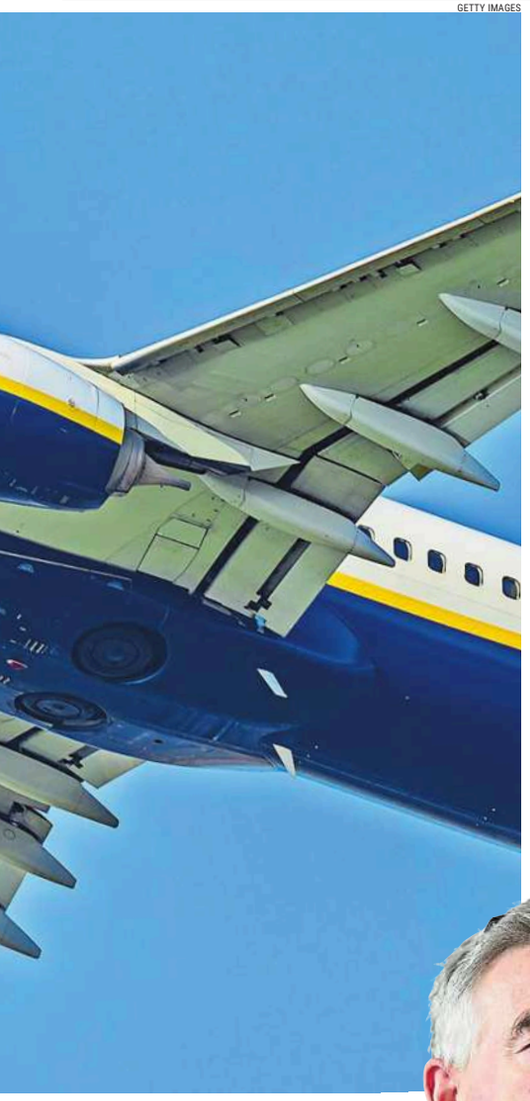


Ryanair, led by Michael O'Leary, below, has had a busy summer season — flying 145 million passengers, up from 138 million — it has not been as profitable as it was last year

in the prior financial year. That indicates that while Ryanair has had a busy summer season — flying 145 million passengers, up from 138 million — it has not been as profitable, showing the extent to which it has had to cut fares and margins, to stimulate demand.

In reality, Ryanair had already been signalling that it would pare back winter services, especially in those countries where it is having a spat over aviation taxes or airport take-off and landing charges.

In Germany — a notoriously difficult market where it competes with the flag-carrier Lufthansa and its various offshoots — Ryanair had already been cutting flights to and from Cologne and Hamburg and has announced it will close its base in Berlin.

It has blamed a doubling in passenger taxes and security fees, a trebling in air traffic control charges and access costs at German airports.

It is a similar story in Belgium where it has been cutting schedules at Brussels and Brussels-Charleroi because of a fivefold increase in passenger taxes by the Belgian government — additional charges passed on to passengers, undermining Ryanair's claims to be a low-fares airline.

In Greece, Ryanair has announced the closure of its base at Thessaloniki and a cut in capacity at Athens. It blamed the decision on charges being levied by Fraport, the German airport operator that dominates the Greek air terminal market.

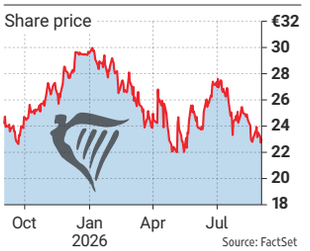
Similar rows with Aena, the Spanish airport operator, have led Ryanair to close, cut or threaten services to regional airports such a Asturias, Vigo, Santiago de Compostela, Santander and Zaragoza and connections to the Canaries.

Ryanair has been in dispute with the Spanish authorities over baggage charges. The airline has also been cutting services to regional airport outposts in France.

Michael O'Leary, Ryanair's chief executive, has repeatedly tried to destabilise its smaller rival Wizz Air, stating that it is the airline most at risk from high fuel costs.

Wizz Air reported yesterday that it increased passenger numbers in August by 25 per cent to 8.7 million and that it would be opening a new base at Santiago de Compostela, Spain.

Seatbelt sign on



Source: FactSet

VW on the brink as chief plans to bypass unions

Robert Lea Industrial Editor

Volkswagen is heading for a breakdown in relations with its workforce after it emerged that the German automotive group's chief executive may try to sidestep trade union representatives and force through 100,000 redundancies and four factory closures.

Europe's largest carmaker, which is second in the world only to Toyota of Japan, has reached a fork in the road and its workers are promising "maximum resistance" if it takes what the unions believe to be the wrong turn.

Oliver Blume, the chief executive, had set out his plan to lay off nearly a sixth of the global workforce and force through the first closure of plants on German soil in Volkswagen's 90-year history.

The supervisory board, which is dominated by representatives of the unions and the state of Lower Saxony, where VW's Wolfsburg headquarters are located, has rejected Blume's plans and there are reports that he will hit the "nuclear button" at a high noon board meeting tomorrow.

That is, he will bypass the board and take his proposals directly to the wider shareholders, a manoeuvre that is being likened to an activist investor agitating for change and subverting a company's normal corporate governance structures.

Before that meeting, trade union representatives have made it plain that if Blume scraps job security agreements there will not be a VW site in Germany that will escape strike action. Blume has said that the company needs to "fundamentally realign" the business.

Its pre-eminence in the emerging Chinese market, a cash cow for the group for a decade or more, hit a roadblock when China's own automotive groups led by BYD, Geely and Chery reached maturity, technologically and commercially, and began reversing their dependence on western companies.

The fall in sales and profit in China has skewered Volkswagen's finances and the group has come under direct attack in its own European market from those Chinese companies that are flooding the continent with competitively priced exports.

On top of that VW, like other European carmakers, is reeling from the 27.5 per cent export tariffs slapped on vehicles bound for the United States in President Trump's trade wars.

Overlaying everything has been Volkwagen's headlong move to lead the legacy carmakers in the transition to zero emission vehicles, an unclear strategy in which the company has burned through billions of euros.

This is a hangover from the diesel emissions scandal where the carmaker used illegal software to cheat on clean air tests.

In his statements attempting to win over employees, Blume has said: "Tariffs, new competitors and geopolitical risks. The entire automotive industry is under enormous pressure. Over the years we have built up structures, capacities and head count. Too many interfaces, too many layers, too many duplicate structures."

Thorsten Gröger, a leading official in the IG Metall union countered: "I can only warn you that if the board tries to call [the existing employment] agreement into question again, then the factory floors will be up in arms at all our sites. We will oppose it with all our might."

Cairn cheered by 'exceptional demand'

Jessica Newman

One of Ireland's biggest housebuilders expects this year's profits to be at the top end of its management's expectations after selling more homes for more money in the first half of the year.

Cairn Homes sold 1,139 homes in the first six months of this year, up from 708 in the same period a year earlier, saying that it had enjoyed "exceptionally strong" demand across its markets "against the background of a structural undersupply of housing".

On average, the company sold each of these homes, net of VAT, for €393,000, up from €387,000 a year ago. Sales to its core first-time-buyer market increased "significantly", it said, having held eight new private launches over the period.

As a result, Cairn said revenues in the six months to June 30 had jumped by 60 per cent to €455.5 million, lifting operating profits 75 per cent to €74.8 million. On a pre-tax level, profits rose to €67.2 million from €37 million.

"Cairn will continue to make a major contribution to Ireland's housing needs," Michael Stanley, its chief executive, said. "Today our sales and forward order book stands at over 5,000 new homes across 30 active developments nationwide."

Workers on a Cairn Homes residential construction site in Dublin

The group said about 6,000 new homes were expected to be delivered between this year and next.

The company, which is listed on the Euronext in Dublin and the London Stock Exchange, said because of its strong performance in the first half, full-year revenues were on course to hit about €1.08 billion, the top end of its guidance range, while operating profits were also anticipated to hit the higher end of forecasts of about €185 million.

Set up in late 2014, the Dublin-based company floated on the London Stock Exchange in 2015, raising €400 million through the flotation. It was the first Irish homebuilder to list in London for more than 20 years. In an attempt to extend its investor base, Cairn took a listing on the main Irish stock exchange in 2017.

Cairn also said it would pay an interim dividend of 4.5 cents a share in November and announced a €50 million share buyback programme. Shares in the company, which have risen by 27 per cent over the past 12 months, climbed a further 10p, or 4.5 per cent, to 234p in London yesterday.

Edward Prest, an analyst at Berenberg, argued that because of the group's impressive growth in the first half of the year, he continued to believe Cairn was "well positioned to continue to take advantage of the favourable dynamics in the Irish housing market".

Uber to axe 3,300 jobs as self-driving taxis take hold

Chris Dorrell

Uber is to cut about 3,300 jobs to shore up its position as the world's dominant ride-hailing platform amid increasing competition from driverless cars.

The cuts, of about 10 per cent of its workforce, will be concentrated in middle management roles to reduce Uber's organisational complexity.

Dara Khosrowshahi, the chief executive, said the lay-offs would make Uber "simpler and faster" while also creating "more capacity to invest in our future". Unusually for a tech company, Khosrowshahi did not blame artificial intelligence for the restructuring.

"Growth has brought complexity: more layers, more co-ordination, more fragmented ownership, and in some cases structures that made sense when businesses were smaller but no longer serve us well," he said.

"A leaner organisation will mean clearer ownership, faster decisions, and more time spent building rather than co-ordinating. It will also generate savings we intend to reinvest in growth, innovation, and the capabilities that will matter most over the coming years."

The company highlighted that it had brought together its delivery teams for restaurants, retail and direct, which had previously operated separately.

The number of employees who sit more than seven layers from the chief executive will be reduced by 20 per cent, and the number of teams with only one or two workers will be halved.

Analysts at Wedbush Securities estimated that the lay-offs could lead to about $1.75 billion in annual savings. "We expect to see all or most of the savings reinvested, and less flowing through to the bottom line," they said.

The company said it was asking the "vast majority" of its remote employees to move to an office. In future, only 1 per cent of its staff would be remote.

The cuts, first reported by Bloomberg, come as Uber faces increasing competition from driverless cars, which could bypass its software.

Waymo, the largest US robotaxi company, has launched its vehicles on its own app in many US cities. Tesla is also looking at developing its own robotaxies, which could also bypass the ride-hailing platform. Shares in Uber have lost 6.5 per cent so far this year.

Uber plans to invest $10 billion in autonomous vehicles in the coming years to defend its position as the dominant platform for autonomous vehicles.

Business

Can Europe take on Elon Musk's Starlink?

THE TIMES
THE SPACE ECONOMY PART 3

Eutelsat's OneWeb may look puny beside American rivals, but it has a lot going for it, writes **Emma Powell**

The record-breaking $1.8 trillion initial public offering of Elon Musk's SpaceX has propelled the space industry from a niche investment theme to a mainstream asset class.

However, it has also underlined the scale of the challenge faced by rivals of the dominant Starlink satellite-enabled broadband network, admits Jean-François Fallacher, chief executive of Eutelsat.

"I'm not going to deny the fact that when you raise $85 billion, it's quite sizeable resources," Fallacher says with a laugh. "It's going to be a formidable competitor, that's for sure."

However, he also welcomes the added transparency that the heavily loss-making company's newly listed status will bring. "That's also going to be interesting in terms of how the company will evolve, how their profitability will evolve," he says.

In OneWeb, Eutelsat operates the only European alternative to Starlink, Musk's constellation of 10,000 satellites that operates in low Earth orbit (LEO). It is a region of space that is closer to the Earth's surface than traditional geostationary satellites, promising to deliver internet access virtually anywhere on the globe.

LEO has become a key battleground in the fight for control of the skies. It offers high-speed connectivity and lower latency, or less delay, than satellites operating in higher orbit, vital for effective combat communications as well as on aeroplanes and ships. The technology is also increasingly being used by households for coverage in remote areas.

European sovereignty has become a key advantage for OneWeb's constellation of about 650 satellites, Fallacher says. OneWeb was acquired by Eutelsat, a satellite provider based in Paris, in 2023. It retains its west London headquarters and the French and British governments continue to hold stakes in the parent company.

"For almost two years now, this is a very strong selling point," the Frenchman says. At the start of last year, Musk warned that Ukraine's "entire front line" would collapse if he turned off the Starlink system, which had become an integral part of Ukraine's battlefield efforts. The comments sent the European Commission rushing to find home-grown alternatives.

Fallacher points towards President Trump's abrupt ban on San Francisco-based Anthropic exporting its most advanced artificial intelligence models as another example of the need for European self-reliance in certain technologies.

"Plus I would say clear governance is helping ... which is a protection," he says, in a swipe at the iron-clad control exerted by Musk at SpaceX through its dual-class share structure.

The launch of Iris 2, a new multi-orbit satellite constellation, is Europe's biggest push yet at independence from America. Although it is one of three private operators deploying the network, Eutelsat will have exclusive distribution rights over three-quarters of the LEO satellites that make up the majority of the constellation.

As the largest single private sector investor, Eutelsat will initially contribute just over €2 billion to the expected €15.6 billion cost, but about €11.6 billion is being funded by the European Union. For Eutelsat, getting Iris 2 off the ground is vital for upgrading its network to next-generation technology. The satellites will have almost twice the capacity of the existing OneWeb constellation.

Last month, the European Commission signed a contract to expand the constellation to 348 satellites, which will provide "sovereign, secure and highly reliable connectivity" for European governments, defence and security forces and emergency services. That has also raised the cost of the constellation since it was first envisaged in 2022. The first launches are expected in 2029, with full deployment now set for 2032.

Separately, OneWeb has 440 new satellites set to be delivered and launched over the next two years, which will increase the capacity of its constellation and replace dying equipment. A further 229 will be launched out to 2034 to ensure continuity of service, it says. But it is envisaged that OneWeb will gradually stop investing in the existing constellation once Iris 2 is fully operational.

"At some point, we will migrate our customers to this new generation of satellites and that's going to be in the horizon of 2030, 2032, this area of time," Fallacher says.

OneWeb has a turbulent history and has faced great strain on its finances. Eutelsat's shares remain just over 75 per cent lower since it announced it was acquiring OneWeb in 2022.

Founded in 2012 by the entrepreneur Greg Wyler, OneWeb attracted early investment from the likes of Sir Richard Branson and SoftBank, the giant Japanese investment group.

However, it was bailed out by the British government at the height of the pandemic after filing for bankruptcy. The $3.4 billion takeover by Eutelsat promised to help finance the development of OneWeb's technology.

Alongside the British and French governments, Sunil Mittal, the Indian telecoms tycoon who is also the largest shareholder in BT, is among its main backers. "He's very involved ... as he should be," Fallacher says of the so-called "telecoms tiger".

Fallacher's arrival in the top job at Eutelsat last year came weeks before a €5 billion refinancing. This helped close a €4 billion funding gap exacerbated by a steady decline in its geostationary satellite business and finances that had become stretched by the ac-

It's Wonderful: Dutch AI firm hits $5bn valuation in 20 months

Helen Cahill Financial Correspondent

A European artificial intelligence company that was launched in January last year has achieved a valuation of $5 billion in its latest funding round.

Wonderful, a platform helping businesses automate tasks, achieved the valuation after closing a fundraising worth $550 million led by Insight Partners, a software-focused private equity firm based in New York, with backing from Salesforce, the American technology company.

The company's existing investors, which include Index Ventures, IVP, Vine Ventures, 9Yards and Bessemer Venture Partners, participated in the investment round, which comes after a previous fundraising in March.

Wonderful, which is headquartered in Amsterdam, in the Netherlands, said it now operated in more than 35 markets and employed 650 people. The company said the fresh funding would be used to develop its products, which customers use to automate workflow and build their own AI products.

Bar Winkler, chief executive and co-founder of Wonderful, said: "We're entering a new era of enterprise transformation. Just as cloud platforms became the foundation of the modern enterprise, AI operating systems will become the foundation of every enterprise. Our customers are already proving that once AI reaches production in one part of the business, it quickly expands across the enterprise."

Wonderful's engineers have been signing up customers by designing custom-made software with AI capabilities and they also train clients to build and expand their technology systems independently. The group said its technology could be used alongside existing software systems to allow businesses to "adopt new models and capabilities as the industry evolves, without continually rebuilding".

Bar Winkler says AI operating systems "will be the foundation of every enterprise"

Roey Lalazar, chief technology officer and co-founder of Wonderful, said: "Customers can adopt whichever parts of the platform make the most sense, integrate them with existing systems, choose the best models for each workload and retain ownership of everything they build. That openness preserves our customers' optionality, while keeping us accountable to stay at the frontier."

AI companies have been gaining large valuations relatively quickly as investors clamour to pick winners in the sector. Last month a six-month-old start-up that is aiming to develop an AI data centre in Norway secured a valuation of $2.4 billion after raising funds from backers including Nvidia, the US technology company. Volta Infrastructure Holdings, which is based in London and was incorporated in January by a former employee of Brookfield Asset Management, also secured a $10 billion data-centre agreement with Anthropic, the AI developer behind the Claude chatbot. Its valuation is about two fifths that of Balfour Beatty, the 117-year-old FTSE 250 international infrastructure group which has about 26,000 staff and had revenues of £10.8 billion last year.

Nscale, another London-based data centre start-up, has gained a $14.6 billion valuation within two years of launch. It has also raised funding from Nvidia as well as the former Meta executives Sheryl Sandberg and Sir Nick Clegg.

Industry critics have argued that the valuations could be inflated, citing the risk of lower-cost Chinese models undermining the economics of many AI investments.

YANN COATSALIOU/AFP

Engineers work on Eutelsat's Konnect satellite. Jean-François Fallacher, below, admits his company is a minnow

quisition of OneWeb. The package has helped bring down net debt, which stood at €1.5 billion at the end of June, or 2.3 times adjusted earnings, from €2.6 billion or 3.9 times a year earlier.

It included a lifeline €1.5 billion capital raising in which the French state more than doubled its stake in the company to 30 per cent, in return for a cash injection of just over €700 million. It has also reduced the UK government's stake from 11 per cent to 7.9 per cent.

Despite Paris more than doubling its stake in the company, Fallacher insists it is not "a French company", pointing towards the Mittal and UK government interests. The company is open to bringing in more European states.

"We would, of course, welcome additional capital and alongside that, eventually welcome other European states to be shareholders in Eutelsat," he says.

The recent funding injection leaves the group fully financed until the end of the decade, including its initial contribution to Iris 2, Fallacher says.

From then, it will be self-sustaining, he insists, as the cashflows generated by OneWeb more than compensate for the fall in demand for its geostationary satellites, which broadcast television signals. "Today [we have] some huge revenue growth over OneWeb," he says.

OneWeb revenues grew by almost 60 per cent during the last financial year, but failed to offset the decline in its video business.

The advent of "cord-cutting", with households cancelling their cable TV subscriptions in favour of streaming services, has put pressure on what was once a lucrative geostationary satellite business. It is aiming to tip the balance during the current financial year.

Over the past financial year, OneWeb revenues accounted for 25 per cent of the group total, up from 15 per cent the previous year, but Fallacher is hoping that this will rise to more than 50 per cent by the end of the decade. Yet the costs of expanding the LEO constellation mean it remains a drag on profit margins.

In July, Amazon announced an aggressive push to become a major player in the LEO market, with plans to launch more than 5,000 satellites by 2028.

Meanwhile Starlink, which launched its first satellites in 2019 and has 12 million subscribers, has established a grip on the market. It has gained an edge with a vertically integrated business model — manufacturing its own ground equipment and satellites and launching them via SpaceX — that has also helped bring down the cost of its user terminals.

Unlike Starlink and Amazon, Eutelsat does not cater to the consumer market, instead selling only to businesses and governments. That means that having fewer satellites is less of an issue, Fallacher says. Its satellites also fly higher than Starlink's.

Fallacher insists OneWeb has plenty of capacity, although the company does not disclose how much.

Aleksander Peterc, an analyst at Bernstein, has estimated that only 20 per cent of the network is currently being utilised. "They have plenty of capacity," Peterc says. "If someone wants a specific level of service they can actually guarantee that bandwidth to them, which is something that Starlink, in highly contested areas, can't do."

Moving into the consumer market is something being considered, Fallacher says, but not with its current generation of satellite technology. "We'll look at that possibility, but that will be post-2030."

He argues that there is plenty of growth to go after before then, estimating that its addressable market will expand five times over by 2033. "This is not niche," he says.

For Fallacher, a telecoms veteran, a push into the consumer market could involve Eutelsat expanding into the direct-to-device industry, which seeks to capitalise on the gaps in traditional mobile phone coverage.

The satellite operator has entered discussions with "a number of parties, but at this stage nothing is public". The former Orange executive says: "We are really considering this possibility."

Such a move would require a different constellation and is not currently accounted for in its existing capital allocation plans.

The nascent market is expanding rapidly, with mobile network operators looking to harness the technology — which beams signals directly from satellites to smartphones — in remote areas where it is either too impractical or expensive for traditional masts and fibre to reach.

Virgin Media O2 became the first operator in the UK to launch satellite-enabled services direct to smartphones earlier this year, signing a deal with Starlink Mobile.

Meanwhile Vodafone has also launched its own joint venture with AST Space Mobile of Texas, called Satellite Connect Europe.

The company has agreed deals to offer wholesale direct-to-device services to European telecoms operators including Telefonica, the Spanish state-backed company, and Orange. Vodafone plans to introduce the service first in the UK.

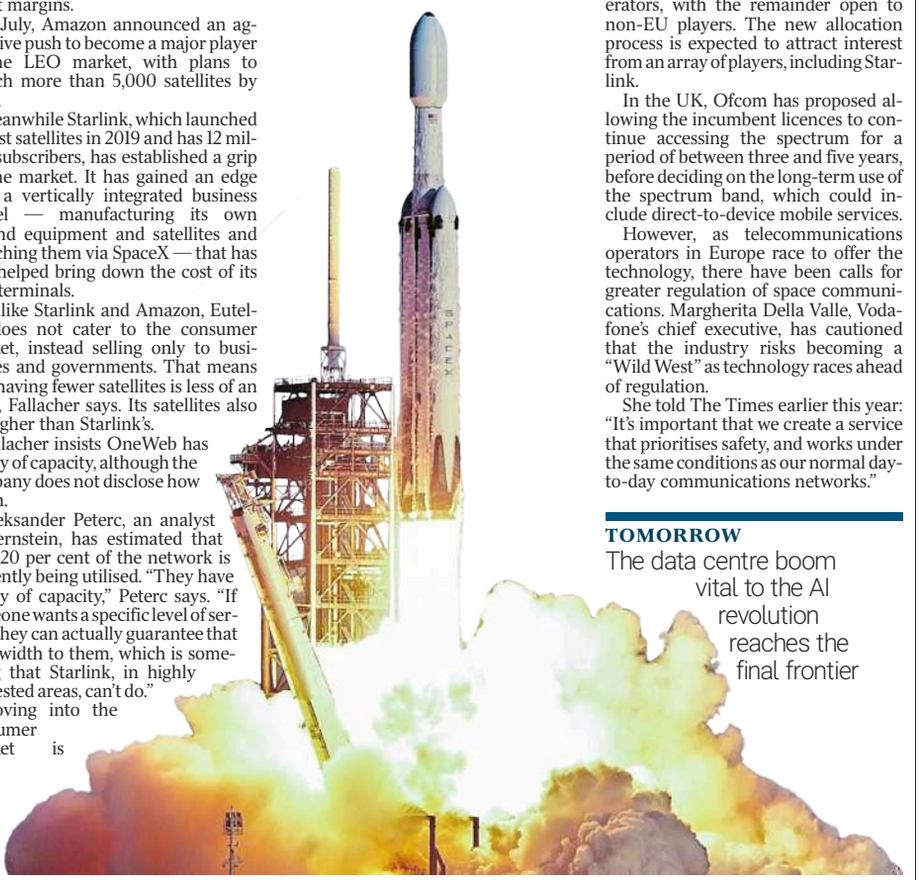
Next year, a strategically valuable slice of Europe's satellite spectrum — the invisible radio waves that enable wireless technology — is set to be allocated. The 2GHz band is currently operated by Viasat and Echostar, two American satellite providers, but their EU licences come up for renewal in May.

The European Commission has said that two-thirds of the capacity will be allocated to native direct-to-device operators, with the remainder open to non-EU players. The new allocation process is expected to attract interest from an array of players, including Starlink.

In the UK, Ofcom has proposed allowing the incumbent licences to continue accessing the spectrum for a period of between three and five years, before deciding on the long-term use of the spectrum band, which could include direct-to-device mobile services.

However, as telecommunications operators in Europe race to offer the technology, there have been calls for greater regulation of space communications. Margherita Della Valle, Vodafone's chief executive, has cautioned that the industry risks becoming a "Wild West" as technology races ahead of regulation.

She told The Times earlier this year: "It's important that we create a service that prioritises safety, and works under the same conditions as our normal day-to-day communications networks."



TOMORROW

The data centre boom vital to the AI revolution reaches the final frontier

Vodafone challenges rivals with TV service

Emma Powell
Media and Telecoms Editor

Vodafone is set to follow its telecommunications rivals in launching a pay-television service in the UK, as it attempts to accelerate its growth in the ultra-competitive broadband market.

The package will bundle live television and streaming from free-to-air broadcasters and American services including Netflix and HBO Max, and be available to new and existing Vodafone customers from October.

Telecom providers including BT's EE and Virgin Media O2 already offer a bundled television package to customers as a way of attracting more broadband subscribers.

VodafoneThree had about two million broadband customers at the end of December, which it is hoping to more than double by 2034.

"We have a big opportunity to grow our fixed [broadband] share and the launch of TV is what our customers are asking for, and will help us to grow our fixed share even further," Max Taylor, VodafoneThree's chief executive, said.

The price of the Vodafone TV package will be announced closer to launch, Taylor said.

The decision comes after Vodafone took full control of its UK joint venture from the Hong Kong owner of Three, in a £4.3 billion deal struck sooner than expected.

Margherita Della Valle has reshaped the group

The FTSE 100 telecoms group and CK Hutchison completed the merger of their UK operations at the end of May last year after securing approval from competition regulators, creating Britain's biggest mobile operator.

Taylor said that it was committed to retaining the Vodafone and Three mobile brands, but its three value brands — Smarty, Voxi and Talkmobile — could eventually be combined.

"There may be consolidation in the future," Taylor said, before adding that the value brands had a "low cost to run" and were currently "doing a great job".

The company has pledged to invest £11 billion in upgrading its mobile network under the £16.5 billion merger with Three in the UK and set out a target of £700 million in annual cost synergies by the end of the decade.

The combination was part of a dramatic reshaping of the FTSE 100 telecoms group under Margherita Della Valle, who took charge in 2023. It has also sold off its Italian and Spanish businesses and returned billions to shareholders.

Earlier this year, Xavier Niel, the French telecoms tycoon, took an 18.8 per cent stake in the group. Analysts expect the billionaire to push for more aggressive cost-cutting at Vodafone, in an effort to push for a further improvement in its share price.

Taylor said he was yet to meet with Niel, but added: "We have a very ambitious plan. We're on track to deliver it, and any shareholder is going to want to support us in delivering against that committed plan to the UK."

Dell's revenue soars as demand for AI servers booms

Chris Dorrell

One of the largest US computer manufacturers raised its revenue guidance by $25 billion after demand for its artificial intelligence servers soared, sending its shares sharply higher.

Dell projected that its revenue would increase to $192 billion in the year to January, up from its May guidance of between $165 billion and $169 billion and comfortably ahead of analysts' expectations. Its shares gained about 10 per cent in New York after its results to trade at $425.

The group has emerged as a major beneficiary of the AI boom, as hyperscalers and tech companies invest in the hardware needed to operate AI data centres. Its shares have gained more than 200 per cent this year. Revenue increased 58 per cent year-on-year to $47 billion in the three months to July, the company said. Net income more than tripled to $4.1 billion, up from $1.2 billion last year.

Jeff Clarke, chief operating officer at Dell, said: "IT environments have shifted from cost centres to value drivers that fuel growth and competitive advantage, and customers are investing accordingly — creating opportunity across our portfolio. That's clearest in our AI server business."

Dell's AI servers, which are equipped with Nvidia's chips, process the datasets required to run complex AI processes. Major customers include specialised cloud computing companies, such as Coreweave, alongside enterprise customers like Eli Lilly, which uses the computers for drug discovery.

Dell reported a record quarter for its AI server division, booking $16.4 billion in revenue and a $95 billion order backlog. The company expects $74 billion in AI server sales for the year, which would be up 200 per cent on last year. Analysts at JP Morgan said the "AI momentum spoke for itself".

However, growth was broad-based. Revenue in its traditional server and networking business increased 122 per cent year-on-year, while storage revenue increased 26 per cent.

Naveen Chhabra, principal analyst at Forrester, said: "Dell's results suggest enterprise AI investment is moving beyond experimentation and driving a broader infrastructure modernisation cycle. Organisations are discovering that deploying AI workloads often requires upgrades across networking, storage, security, observability, and end-user computing environments."

Clarke also said the performance of the AI servers division had partly been driven by price increases, as the company navigates rising input costs. Prices for memory chips have increased significantly this year, as hyperscalers try to lock down supply for the data centre build-out. But Clarke said underlying demand for Dell's servers remained strong despite the price increases.

"The underlying demand for the technology is significant ... demand outran supply last quarter. Demand outran supply this quarter. The pipeline remains robust," he said.

Business Unit trusts

The Times unit trust information service

ALLIANZ GLOBAL INVESTORS
Inv Serv: 020 7065 1400 Helpline: 0800 317 573

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Strategic Bond Fund ‡	127.13		-0.43	8.25
UK Equity A ‡	382.56		-3.08	4.13
UK Growth ‡	10165.61		-91.05	2.27

ARTEMIS FUND MGRS
0800 092 2051
Authorised Inv Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Global Income Fund R Acc ‡	382.69		-1.50	...
Global Income Fund R Inc ‡	215.21		-0.84	...
Global Select Fund R ‡	229.97		-1.11	...
High Income Fund R Inc ‡	66.72		-0.08	...
Income Fund R Acc ‡	794.19		-4.68	...
Income Fund R Inc ‡	304.4		-1.79	...
Monthly Dist & R Inc ‡	92.46		-0.17	...
SmartGarp Eurp Equity R ‡	887.64		-0.80	...
SmartGarp Global Equity R ‡	700.39		-0.45	...
SmartGarp UK Equity R ‡	4256.67		-0.56	...
Strategic Assets R Acc ‡	96.18		-0.12	...
Strategic Bd R M Acc ‡	115.79		-0.31	...
Strategic Bd R M Inc ‡	52.35		-0.14	...
Strategic Bd R Q Acc ‡	115.58		-0.31	...
Strategic Bd R Q Inc ‡	52.03		-0.14	...
UK Select R Acc ‡	1308.11		-6.44	...
Uk Smaller Cos R Acc ‡	2311.95		-10.53	...
UK Special Sits R Acc ‡	1075.24		-7.54	...

AXA FRAMLINGTON UNIT MGMT
Dling: 0845 602 1952 Priv Clients:0845 777 5511

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Health ‡	3434		+23.00	...
UK Select Opps Inc ‡	2092		-13.00	1.10
UK Sml Cos Inc ‡	325.4		-2.50	0.37
UK Sust Eqty R Dis ‡	232		-1.50	1.10

AXA FUND MANAGERS
Admin & Enq 0117 989 0808
UK/Global Investment Companies

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Global Gwth Acc R ‡	288.1		...	0.52
Japan Acc A ‡	162.3		...	1.51

CIS UNIT MANAGERS
08457 46 46 46

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
European Growth ‡	292		-0.34	1.14
Sus Leaders ‡	1014		-0.20	1.47
UK Growth ‡@	867.3		-0.40	1.69
UK Income ‡	257.4		-0.35	3.83

CLOSE FUND MANAGEMENT
Dealing 020 7426 6232

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Winchester ‡	5745.61		...	0.60

COLUMBIA THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS
Enqs:0870 601 6183 Dealing: 0870 6083
Share Class 1-Retail

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Euro Gwth & Inc ‡	1571		-9	0.10
FTSE All Shr Track ‡	592.2		-0.9	2.70
Global Gwth SCI ‡	395.5		-4.7	...
Strategic Bd ‡	226.6		-0.8	4.00

EDENTREE INV MGMT
0800 358 3010

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Sust Eur Eqty A Dis ‡	490.9		-2.40	1.84
Sust Gbl Eqty A Dis ‡	453.6		-3.10	0.53
Sust Mgd Income ‡	140.1		-0.20	4.02
Sust Sterling Bond A Dis ‡	84.47		-0.19	4.99
Sust UK Eqty A Dis ‡	249.1		-1.60	1.77
Sust UK Eqty Opps A Dis ‡	321.2		-3.70	1.47

FIDELITY INTERNATIONAL
Private Clnts:0800 414161 Broker Dlgs:0800 414181

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Amer Spec ‡	2908		...	...
American ‡	7906		...	...
Euro Opps ‡	732.7		...	0.49
European ‡	4332		...	0.79
Global Focus ‡	3651		...	...
Global High Income Bond A Dis ‡	22.22		...	6.43
Global Special Sits ‡	8816		...	...
Japan ‡	971.1		...	0.34
Moneyblder Bal ‡	48.34		...	3.57
Moneyblder Inc ‡	27.91		...	5.08
Moneyblder UK Ind ‡	200.39		...	2.50
Special Sits ‡	7488		...	1.65

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Opportunities Fund A Dis ‡	104.7		...	1.73

HALIFAX INVESTMENT FUND MGRS
01296 386 386
Authorised Inv Funds
Share Class C

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corporate Bond ‡	37.02		...	4.70
Intl Gwth ‡	214.9		...	0.60
UK FTSE 100 IT ‡	107.8		...	...
UK FTSE All-S IT ‡	119.7		...	...

HSBC GLOBAL ASSET MGMT (UK)
Enq:0845 745 6123 Dlg:0845 745 6126 Mon-Frid:8-6
HSBC Index Tracker Investment Funds (OEIC)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Amer Ind Acc ‡	1617		-6	0.78
Euro Ind Acc ‡	1821		-10	2.33
Euro Ind Inc ‡	1055		-6	2.38
FTSE 100 Ind Acc ‡	437.7		-0.4	2.52
FTSE 100 Ind Inc ‡	177.8		-0.2	2.66
FTSE 250 Ind Acc ‡	404.0		-3.4	2.91
FTSE 250 Ind Inc ‡	219.1		-1.8	2.90
FTSE All-S Acc ‡	1102		-1	2.68
FTSE FTSE All-S Inc ‡	495.5		-0.8	2.82
Japan Ind Acc ‡	232.6		-4.6	1.45
Japan Ind Inc ‡	168.7		-3.3	1.49
Pacific Ind Acc ‡	1082		-12	1.53
Pacific Ind Inc ‡	612.0		-7.1	1.55

HSBC Investment Funds (OEIC) Retail Share Class

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bd Acc ‡@	309.4		-0.9	4.10
Income Acc ‡	1062		...	3.28
Monthly Inc Acc ‡@	313.4		...	3.75
Monthly Inc Inc ‡@	155.9		...	4.02
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Acc ‡@	221.1		-0.3	3.04
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Inv ‡@	85.72		-0.08	3.10

HSBC Specialist Investment Fds (OEIC)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American Index Retail Inc ‡	1245		-5	0.77

INVESCO FUND MGRS LTD
Dling:0800 085 8571 Inv Serv:0800 085 8677
Brkr Serv:0800 028 2121
Invesco Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bond ‡	229.4		...	4.11
High Income Dis ‡	428.54		...	3.18
Income & Growth Dis ‡	499.54		...	3.13
Income Inc ‡	1655.76		...	2.89
Money Acc ‡	108.09		...	3.63
Monthly Inc Plus Dis ‡	91.46		...	5.79
UK Opps UK Acc ‡	1379.26		...	1.49
UK Sml Cos Eqty Acc ‡	1330.35		...	1.24

INVESTEC FUND MGRS LTD
Broker Support and Dealing: 020 7597 1900
OEIC Series I, ii,iii & iv

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American A Acc ‡	867.2		-8.09	...
Cautious Managed A Acc ‡	470.06		-0.28	2.65
Cautious Managed A Inc ‡	269.53		-0.14	2.53
Diversified Growth A Acc ‡	328.11		-1.17	0.21
Diversified Growth Inc ‡	120.73		-0.43	0.97
Diversified Income A Acc ‡	375.63		-0.23	3.90
Diversified Income A Inc ‡	67.37		-0.04	5.32
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Ac ‡	143.88		-0.04	5.79
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Inc ‡	65.47		-0.01	7.63
Emerging Mkts Equity A Ac ‡	291.85		-0.54	0.04
Emerging Mkts Leaders A Acc ‡	1232.48		-8.19	...
Global Equity A Acc ‡	299.14		-0.8	...
Global Franchise A Acc ‡	400.57		-2.83	...
Global Free Enterprise A Acc ‡	2090.98		-6.85	...
Global Gold A Acc ‡	595.5		-7.88	...
Global Special Situations A Acc ‡	532.62		-0.35	...
Global Special Situations A Inc ‡	408.62		-0.26	...
UK Special Situations A Acc ‡	2671.46		-18.53	1.06
UK Special Situations A Inc ‡	918.74		-6.37	1.07

For ISIS Asset Mgmt see F&C Fd Mgmt Ltd (OEIC)

JANUS HENDERSON INVESTORS
Investor Serv: 0800 832 831 Dlng:0845 946 4646

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
All Stcks Credit A Inc ‡	112.4		...	4.50
Asian Div Inc U Trust Inc ‡	101.4		...	5.60
Cautious Managed Fd A Acc ‡	353.1		...	3.80
Cautious Managed A Inc ‡	151.5		...	3.90
China Opp Fund A Acc ‡	1292		...	0.10
Emg Mkts Opps Fd A Acc ‡	302.1		...	...
Erpn Sel Opps Fd A Acc ‡	3196		...	0.20
Fix IntMnthly Inc Fd Acc ‡	33.04		...	5.90
Global Equity Fund Acc ‡	6475		...	...
Global Equity Income A Ac ‡	87.08		...	2.30
Global Tech A Acc ‡	6870		...	...
Instl UK idx Opps A Acc ‡	177.4852		...	2.10
M-Asset Abs Rtn A Acc ‡	188.3		...	2.70
M-Man Active Fd A Acc ‡	334.5		-1.9	1.80
M-Man Inc Grth A Inc ‡	160.5		...	2.80
M-Man Inc Fd Grth A Acc ‡	231.2		...	2.70
Sterling Bond U Trst Acc ‡	227.4		...	4.30
Sterling Bond U Trst Inc ‡	54.94		...	4.30
Strategic Bond A Inc ‡	95.13		...	5.70
UK Abs Ret Fd A Acc ‡	206.9		...	2.10
UK Alpha Fund A Acc ‡	196.6		...	1.20
US Growth Fund A Acc ‡	2935		...	...

J.P. MORGAN ASSET MANAGEMENT
OEIC

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Equity Core E Net Acc ‡@	704.2000		-1.0000	2.54

JUPITER UT TRUST MANAGERS LTD
020 7581 3020

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Distribution & Growth ‡	124.53		-0.1359	2.93
Euro Special Sits ‡	587.64		-0.6479	0.71
European ‡	3910.19		-0.6518	0.61
Financial Opps ‡	1341.85		+0.3739	1.01
Global Macro Bd L GBP ACC ‡	426.44		+0.7989	3.87
Merlin Bal Acc ‡	345.24		-0.8349	2.26
Merlin Growth Acc ‡	834.71		-0.0244	0.20

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Merlin Inc Acc ‡@	469.22		-0.2398	3.40
Merlin Wwide Inc ‡	607.67		-0.5319	...
UK Dynamic Equity L Dis ‡	287.26		-0.9149	1.75
UK Growth ‡	280.05		-0.9266	0.64
UK Income Trust ‡	1009.4		-0.4273	4.58

LEGAL & GENERAL (UT MANGRS) LTD
Enquiries: 0870 050 0955 Dealing: 0870 050 0956

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Euro Ind Acc ‡@	798.4		-2.9	1.90
Euro Ind Inc ‡@	476.7		-1.8	1.90
Fixed Int Acc ‡	149		-0.4	4.70
Fixed Int Dist ‡	61.57		-0.17	4.70
Global Health ‡	127.7		+1.6	0.90
Glob Tech Acc ‡@	235.5		+0.3	...
High Inc Acc ‡@	154.2		-0.3	5.70
Japan Ind Acc ‡	111.7		-2.2	1.30
Pacific Ind Acc ‡	426.1		-7.7	1.30
UK Index Trust Acc ‡	534.5		-1	2.50
Uk Index Trust Dist ‡	231.4		-0.4	2.50
US Ind Acc ‡	1411		+5	0.50
Worldwide Acc ‡	467.6		-2.1	0.90

M&G SECURITIES
Enq:0800 390 390 Dealing Line: 0800 328 3196
Authorised Inv Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Charifund Inc ‡	1899.73		-1.37	5.13

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 2

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Extra Income Inc ‡@	816.89		-0.83	5.16
Gilt & Fxd Int Inc ‡@	65.49		-0.17	4.89
Gl Hi Yd Bd Inc ‡@	39.61		-0.07	6.31
Index Linked Bd Inc ‡	100.61		-0.17	1.59
Index Trckr Inc ‡	103.83		-0.16	3.03
Short Dated Corp Bd Inc ‡@	25.04		-0.02	4.34
UK Select A Inc ‡	3282.13		-14.95	2.66

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 3

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bd A Inc ‡	32.46		-0.08	5.13
Dividend Inc ‡	66.15		-0.08	5.40
Recovery A Inc ‡	139.58		-0.71	2.91
Sml Cos Inc ‡	354.22		-3.97	2.89

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 4

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Episode Allocation A Inc ‡@	159.95		-0.26	3.83

MARKS & SPENCER UNIT TRUST
0808 005 5555

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
High Income ‡	87.15		...	4.60
High Income Acc ‡	297.4		...	4.60
UK 100 Comp Acc ‡	721		...	3.10
UK 100 Comp Inc ‡	318.6		...	3.10
UK Select Port ‡	479.7		...	2.90
UK Select Port Acc ‡	1097.4		...	2.90
W'wide Mgd Acc ‡	1336		...	0.20
Worldwide Mgd Acc ‡	743.6		...	0.20

MORGAN STANLEY INVESTMENT MGMT
Enquiries: 0800 0961 962
The Morgan Stanley Funds (UK)
Class A Shares
Equity

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Glob Bal Inc F F Acc ‡	1049.40		...	1.54
Glob Bal Inc F F Inc ‡	938.65		...	1.55
Glob Bal Inc F I Inc ‡	936.69		...	1.49
Glob Bal Inc F I Acc ‡	1046.53		...	1.47
Glob Bal Sust F F Acc ‡	1036.68		...	1.65
Glob Bal Sust F F Inc ‡	989.88		...	1.66
Glob Bal Sust F I Acc ‡	1034.12		...	1.57
Glob Bal Sust F I Inc ‡	989.45		...	1.60
Glob Br Eq Fund F Inc ‡	1114.75		...	4.28
Glob Br Eq Fund I Acc ‡	1755.81		...	4.25
Glob Br Eq Fund I Inc ‡	1178.3		...	4.37
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	14227.39		...	0.32
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡	1643.12		...	0.45
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	1751.4		...	0.45
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡	3826.7		...	0.32
Glob Quality Fund F Acc (PH) ‡	1532.35		...	0.49
Glob Quality Fund F Inc ‡	1497.26		...	0.51
Glob Quality Fund I Acc ‡	1538.55		...	0.34
Glob Quality Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	1526.92		...	0.34
Glob Quality Fund F Acc ‡	1554.93		...	0.51
Stg Corp Bond F F Acc ‡	143.42		...	4.92
Stg Corp Bond F F Inc ‡	96.88		...	4.96
Stg Corp Bond F I Inc ‡	1369.53		...	4.77
Stg Corp Bond F I Acc ‡	3033.89		...	4.77
US Adv F F Acc ‡	2444.57		...	...
US Adv F F Acc (PH) ‡	1466.24		...	...
US Adv F I Acc ‡	2573.41		...	...
US Adv F I Acc (PH) ‡	1517.87		...	...

SANTANDER UNIT TST MGRS
08457 413002

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Equity Inc Inc ‡	234.3		...	...
Stkmkt 100 Tkr ‡	230.8000		...	...
UK Growth I Acc ‡	649.2		...	...
UK Growth Inc ‡	311.7		...	...

SCOTTISH MUTUAL INV MNGRES LTD
0141 248 6100

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Far Eastern Inc	617.0700	649.4700	...	...
Mutual Far Eastern	1373.4000	1449.5000	-20.61	0.39
Mutual UK Eq	1429.4900	1508.7000	...	7.81
UK Equity Inc	562.2300	593.3800	...	7.81

SCOTTISH WIDOWS UNIT TRUST MNGRS
0845 300 2244
Overseas Growth Investment Funds
Tracker & Special Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Trkr A Acc ‡	604.6		-5.70	2.50
UK Trkr A Inc ‡	275.1		-2.60	2.50

UK & Income Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bond A Acc ‡@	327.0		-0.80	4.20
Corp Bond A Inc ‡@	106.9		-0.30	4.20
Envir Invtr A Acc ‡	465.9		-4.00	2.10
Hi Inc Bond A Ac ‡@	300.3		-0.30	6.40
Hi Inc Bond A Inc ‡@	70.44		-0.08	6.40
Hi Res A Acc ‡@	560.6		-2.10	3.70
Hi Res A Inc ‡@	150.2		-0.60	3.80
Strat In A Acc ‡@	227.7		-0.50	4.60
Strat In A Inc ‡@	85.48		-0.20	4.60
UK Eq Trckr A ‡	137.0		+0.10	2.50

OEIC B Class

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Trkr B Acc ‡	669.8		-6.40	2.60
UK Trkr B Inc ‡	273.6		-2.60	2.60

OEIC C Class

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Eq Tkr C ‡	133.7		...	2.60

STANDARD LIFE INVESTMENTS
0845 279 3003
Investment Funds (OEIC)-Retail Shares

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
AAA Inc CAT Acc ‡	97.86		...	2.52
AAA Inc CAT Inc ‡	50.37		...	2.52
AAA Income Acc ‡	107.90		...	...
Amer Eq Gth Acc ‡	278.30		...	...
Glb Advtg CAT Acc ‡	200.9		...	1.32
Glob Advtg Acc ‡	264.80		...	...
Higher Inc Acc ‡	186.00		...	...
Higher Inc Inc ‡	47.46		...	...
Managed Acc ‡	517.6		...	1.83
UK Ethical Acc ‡	256.10		...	...
UK Smlr Cos Acc ‡	799.20		...	...

SVS BROWN SHIPLEY FUNDS
Enquiries:0141 222 1151

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Balanced A Acc ‡	185.56		...	2.02
Blanced A Inc ‡	156.5		...	2.07
Cautious A Acc ‡	132.39		...	2.44
Cautious A Inc ‡	103.99		...	2.48
Dynamic A Acc ‡	495.99		...	1.40
Dynamic A Inc ‡	432.57		...	1.41
Growth A Acc ‡	489.73		...	1.63
Income A Acc ‡	317.28		...	2.17

THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS
Client Serv: 0800 0684000
Retail Shares Class 1

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Threadneedle HY Bd Rtl Inc ‡	39.309		-5.87	...
Threadneedle Mnthly Etr Inc Inc ‡	100.0845		-55.06	...
Threadneedle SterlingCorp Bd Inc ‡	54.3687		-17.01	...
Threadneedle SterlingCorp Acc ‡	54.2575		-17.02	...
Threadneedle Stg Bd Ret Inc ‡	39.0989		-15.6	...
Threadneedle Strat Bd Ret ‡	41.4528		-10.78	...
Threadneedle UK Eq Inc Rtl Inc ‡	117.8108		-96.04	...
Threadneedle UK Growth & inc Rtl Inc ‡	110.2954		-103.48	...
Threadneedle UK Istl Rtl ‡	247.5478		-51.7	...
Threadneedle UK Mnthly Inc Rtl Inc ‡	88.1471		-55.73	...
Threadneedle UK Rtl Inc ‡	165.5252		-68.83	...
Theadneedle U Smaller Coms Rtl Inc ‡	396.8876		-384.88	...

For Resolution see Ignis

TU FUND MANAGERS LTD

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
IFSL Marlborough Eur A Dis	989.9	989.9	...	1.24

* Yield expressed as CAR (Compound Annual Return); † Ex dividend; ‡Middle price; . . . No significant data. # Periodic charge deducted from capital; @ Exit charge

British funds

Index-Linked

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/−	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
73.08	62.92	Tr IL 0 ½% 50	63.27	−.06	0.79	2.59
66.33	56.14	Tr IL 0 ¼% 52	56.41	−.02	0.44	2.59
101.91	97.20	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 28	99.64	+.07	0.13	0.31
100.99	97.50	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 29	98.50	+.06	0.13	0.72
98.88	94.73	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 31	95.95	+.10	0.13	0.97
88.33	82.97	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 36	83.39	−.01	0.15	1.92
82.85	76.16	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 39	77.16	+.03	0.16	2.22
79.32	71.93	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 41	72.41	−.01	0.17	2.32
74.05	65.19	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 44	66.52	−.03	0.19	2.49
71.23	62.40	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 46	62.83	−.12	0.20	2.55
68.00	58.90	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 48	59.10	−.09	0.21	2.58
60.61	49.35	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 56	49.63	−.12	0.25	2.51
58.90	48.29	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 58	48.54	−.02	0.26	2.49
54.25	42.88	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 65	43.23	−.14	0.29	2.35
53.89	40.40	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 68	42.12	−.09	0.30	2.29
57.66	42.83	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 73	43.28	−.05	0.29	2.00
97.88	93.36	Tr IL 0 ¾% 34	93.97	+.11	0.80	1.60
79.12	70.53	Tr IL 0 ¾% 47	70.76	−.10	1.06	2.54
62.70	49.79	Tr IL 0 ⅜% 62	51.22	−.04	0.73	2.43
87.38	80.45	Tr IL 0 ⅝% 40	80.83	+.01	0.77	2.28
84.28	75.92	Tr IL 0 ⅝% 42	76.40	−.07	0.82	2.39
104.16	100.95	Tr IL 1 ¼% 27	101.51	+.06	1.23	0.01
103.67	99.28	Tr IL 1 ¼% 32	99.94	+.12	1.25	1.26
86.56	72.33	Tr IL 1 ¼% 54	73.66	−.06	1.70	2.57
85.60	72.86	Tr IL 1 ¼% 55	73.21	−.09	1.71	2.56
99.52	94.19	Tr IL 1 ⅛% 35	94.56	+.03	1.19	1.78
97.09	90.65	Tr IL 1 ⅛% 37	91.01	+.07	1.24	2.02
102.53	95.76	Tr IL 1 ¾% 38	96.18	+.01	1.82	2.11
99.42	87.84	Tr IL 1 ⅞% 49	88.30	−.15	2.12	2.55
248.27	236.46	Tr IL 2% 35	241.44	+.15	0.83	1.78
349.35	338.55	Tr IL 4 ⅛% 30	341.94	+.34	1.21	0.96

Longs (Over 15 Years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/−	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
26.99	21.75	Tr 0 ½% 61	22.15	−.14	2.26	5.58
65.04	54.88	Tr 0 ⅞% 51	55.35	−.04	0.23	2.60
38.39	32.57	Tr 0 ⅝% 50	32.80	−.14	1.91	5.86
47.60	40.65	Tr 1 ½% 53	40.86	−.14	3.67	5.92
45.88	39.36	Tr 1 ¼% 51	39.57	−.15	3.16	5.92
33.04	26.83	Tr 1 ⅛% 73	27.09	−.16	4.15	5.43
48.44	41.48	Tr 1 ¾% 57	41.54	−.17	4.21	5.87
48.36	41.46	Tr 1 ⅝% 54	41.68	−.17	3.90	5.90
41.45	35.13	Tr 1 ⅝% 71	35.21	−.18	4.62	5.56
57.14	49.25	Tr 2 ½% 65	49.44	−.20	5.06	5.78
74.02	63.94	Tr 3 ½% 68	64.33	−.26	5.44	5.77
81.50	71.78	Tr 3 ¾% 52	72.00	−.22	5.21	5.87
80.90	70.50	Tr 3 ¾% 53	71.16	−.23	5.27	5.89
88.15	77.00	Tr 4 ¼% 55	77.46	−.26	5.49	5.87
83.52	72.60	Tr 4% 60	73.01	−.26	5.48	5.85

Mediums (5-15 Years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/−	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
83.19	79.47	Tr 0 ¼% 31	80.88	−.12	0.31	4.65
86.27	82.79	Tr 0 ⅜% 30	84.22	−.11	0.45	4.61
72.25	67.14	Tr 0 ⅝% 35	68.08	−.17	0.92	5.14
79.97	75.46	Tr 0 ⅞% 33	76.39	−.14	1.15	4.95
48.97	42.69	Tr 0 ⅞% 46	42.91	−.17	2.04	5.82
54.44	47.62	Tr 1 ½% 47	47.86	−.18	3.13	5.86
61.88	55.55	Tr 1 ¼% 41	56.02	−.22	2.23	5.60
66.75	60.85	Tr 1 ⅛% 39	61.45	−.18	1.83	5.44
75.83	69.99	Tr 1 ¾% 37	70.43	−.19	2.48	5.34
55.77	48.82	Tr 1 ¾% 49	49.07	−.17	3.57	5.87
85.07	81.01	Tr 1% 32	82.10	−.12	1.22	4.80
82.54	74.13	Tr 3 ½% 45	74.43	−.22	4.70	5.78
95.49	90.74	Tr 3 ¼% 33	91.06	−.16	3.57	4.89
80.41	72.34	Tr 3 ¼% 44	72.71	−.20	4.47	5.75
100.00	85.76	Tr 3 ¾% 38	86.17	−.20	4.35	5.39
102.40	96.28	Tr 4 ½% 34	96.57	−.20	4.66	5.03
101.93	0.01	Tr 4 ½% 35	95.89	−.19	4.69	5.10
96.45	0.01	Tr 4 ½% 42	87.71	−.26	5.13	5.67
102.33	0.01	Tr 4 ¼% 32	97.35	−.16	4.37	4.78
100.56	94.65	Tr 4 ¼% 34	94.92	−.20	4.48	5.04
99.39	92.65	Tr 4 ¼% 36	93.00	−.19	4.57	5.19
100.00	88.36	Tr 4 ¼% 39	88.67	−.23	4.79	5.48
100.00	86.92	Tr 4 ¼% 40	87.29	−.23	4.87	5.55
90.97	81.26	Tr 4 ¼% 46	81.69	−.22	5.20	5.80
89.58	79.63	Tr 4 ¼% 49	79.97	−.23	5.31	5.83
101.49	97.42	Tr 4 ⅛% 31	97.58	−.12	4.23	4.73
100.70	95.50	Tr 4 ⅛% 33	95.70	−.18	4.31	4.90
104.72	100.25	Tr 4 ¾% 30	100.43	−.12	4.73	4.64
103.33	96.72	Tr 4 ¾% 35	97.01	−.21	4.90	5.16
102.00	93.68	Tr 4 ¾% 38	94.06	−.23	5.05	5.42
102.58	98.89	Tr 4 ⅜% 30	99.05	−.11	4.42	4.67
97.07	88.89	Tr 4 ⅜% 40	89.21	−.25	4.90	5.52
100.37	98.93	Tr 4 ⅝% 32	99.10	−.15	4.67	4.81
100.00	94.32	Tr 4 ⅝% 37	94.64	−.21	4.89	5.30
100.99	96.87	Tr 4 ⅞% 36	97.22	−.20	5.01	5.24
105.68	96.38	Tr 5 ¼% 41	96.80	−.26	5.42	5.58
105.44	92.58	Tr 5 ⅜% 56	93.07	−.29	5.78	5.87

Shorts (Under 5 Years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/−	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
91.87	89.09	Tr 0 ½% 29	90.98	−.05	0.55	4.50
98.67	91.49	Tr 0 ⅛% 28	94.48	−.03	0.13	4.20
99.57	96.27	Tr 0 ⅜% 26	99.56	+.01	0.38	3.69
91.00	0.01	Tr 0 ⅞% 29	89.31	−.05	0.98	4.58
97.51	95.36	Tr 1 ¼% 27	97.40	− ...	1.28	4.32
95.46	92.89	Tr 1 ⅝% 28	94.27	−.04	1.72	4.47
101.17	98.03	Tr 4% 29	98.42	−.07	4.06	4.62
101.39	99.44	Tr 4 ¼% 27	99.82	−.05	4.26	4.39
101.88	98.28	Tr 4 ⅛ % 29	98.67	−.07	4.18	4.62
100.70	99.60	Tr 4 ⅛% 27	100.01	+ ...	4.12	4.04
101.65	99.40	Tr 4 ⅜% 28	99.83	−.03	4.38	4.50
107.15	103.08	Tr 6% 28	103.33	−.07	5.81	4.43

* maturities having an eight-month indexation lag.

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FCA urged to investigate Barclays over MFS collapse

James Hurley
Assistant Business Editor

The City regulator has been urged to investigate Barclays' relationship with a collapsed mortgage lender at the centre of an alleged £1.3 billion fraud.

Investors in Market Financial Solutions have written to the Financial Conduct Authority to request a formal investigation into the bank's conduct as "both MFS's corporate bank and one of its largest institutional lenders".

MFS Creditors Action Group, which represents some of the private individuals owed an estimated £200 million by MFS, wrote calling for the authority to examine whether the bank missed red flags, or failed to share concerns, which may have reduced the damage caused by the group's failure.

In a letter, seen by The Times, Paresh Dabasia, executive director of the group, claimed: "Barclays was not a passive bystander to MFS's collapse."

MFS was placed into administration in February after a High Court judge ordered an inquiry into fraud claims.

Ex-MFS CEO Paresh Raja is accused of taking money from the business

By the time it failed, MFS had a loan book of about £2.6 billion. Barclays, Atlas SP (part of Apollo), Elliott Management, Wells Fargo, Castlelake, Jefferies and Santander are among the Wall Street and City institutions exposed.

Dabasia, one of about 100 individuals who are also exposed in the insolvency, claimed that Barclays froze his accounts and "de-banked" him in the wake of MFS's failure. He alleged that other individual MFS investors who bank with Barclays reported similar issues. He said this was a "bitter irony" given Barclays' connections to MFS.

Barclays declined to comment on the letter or the de-banking claims.

Paresh Raja, MFS's former chief executive, is accused by insolvency practitioners of extracting "vast sums" from the business, essentially by securing debt from various parties against the same properties, a practice known as "double pledging". He is accused of misappropriating £1.3 billion and is subject to a global asset freezing order to the same value. Raja has denied the allegations, maintaining there was no fraud or dishonesty and saying he categorically denies any wrongdoing.

Barclays froze MFS's main accounts in November 2025. Insolvency practitioners have alleged in court filings that the bank's actions suggested it had "concerns, or strong suspicions, that these accounts were tainted by money-laundering or other criminal activities".

Barclays' action followed reports that MFS had connections to a corruption scandal in Bangladesh where Saifuzzaman Chowdhury, the former land minister, was alleged to have used the lender for UK property transactions, with the assets later frozen by the National Crime Agency. Chowdhury has denied any wrongdoing and claimed the investigation is politically motivated.

As well as providing account services to MFS, Barclays is said to have an exposure of about £500 million.

The creditor group told the regulator that it understands "that Barclays provided core banking services to hundreds of other businesses connected to MFS's founder, Paresh Raja, and the wider group he controlled.

"That combination of roles gave Barclays a concentration of information about the group's structure and cash flows that almost no other counterparty, and seemingly not the FCA itself, had access to. We believe this placed Barclays in the best position of any institution to identify the pattern that has since emerged."

About £143 million of Barclays' exposure was refinanced by Wells Fargo last November. The creditor group claimed this and its freezing of MFS accounts the same month "raised questions".

"Did Barclays act on its own recognition of irregularities to protect MFS, its other lenders and the wider market, or did it act first to protect its own book while other flows continued unchecked?," it said. "We ask the FCA to establish, using its supervisory and enforcement powers, when Barclays compliance and relationship-management functions first had grounds for suspicion, and what Barclays did, and did not do, with that knowledge."

They also highlighted a report by The Times which revealed that Raja had been subject to bankruptcy-related restrictions between 2006 and 2009, which prevented his involvement in the formation or management of a company during the period MFS was set up.

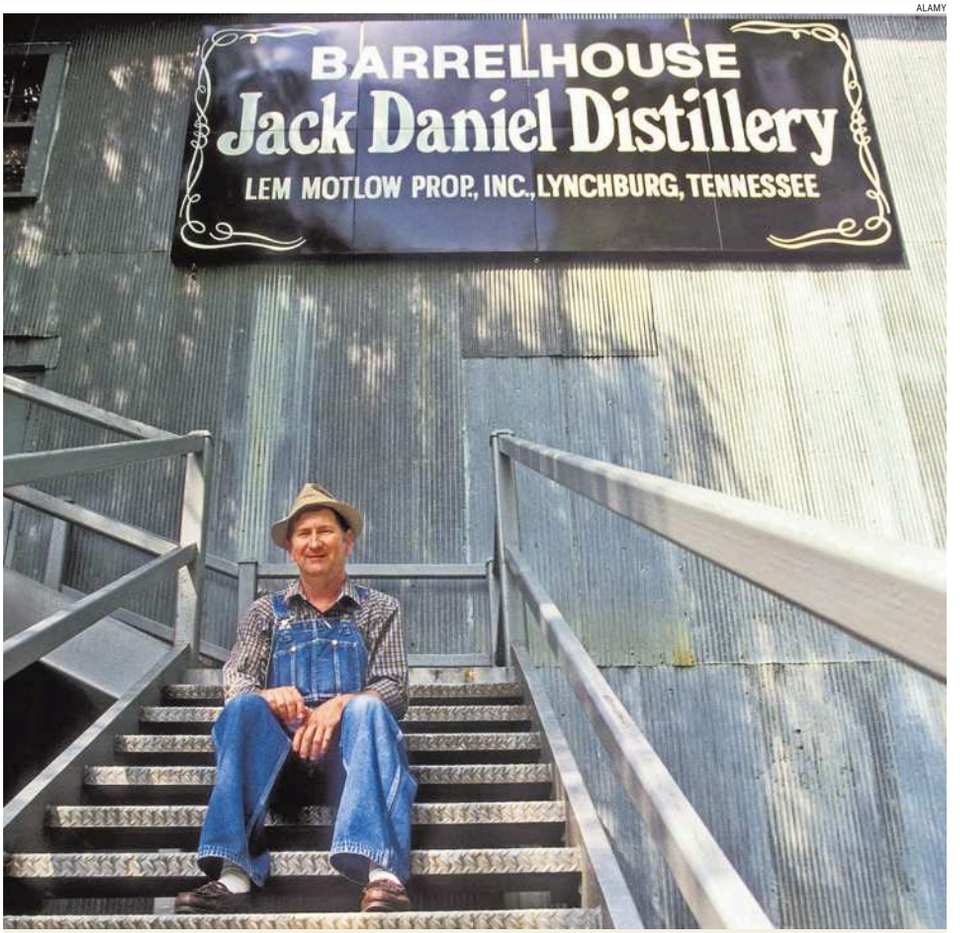
MFS was established by Pratibha Dewan, who later became Raja's wife, in November 2006. Raja became an MFS director in 2017 but was often referred to by MFS as its founder or co-founder.

"This is precisely the kind of adverse history that enhanced due diligence exists to surface, and an arrangement in which a banned individual's spouse holds the formal directorship is precisely the kind of structure that ought to increase scrutiny, not reduce it," Dabasia alleged.

The creditor group added that the authority should look at whether the bank's "financial crime systems and controls were adequate".

An FCA spokesman said: "We have opened an enforcement investigation into MFS. We welcome information from anyone affected by the collapse."

ALAMY



Geopolitical tensions sour whiskey firm's spirits

The maker of Jack Daniel's whiskey missed first-quarter sales estimates and stuck to its annual targets, joining other spirits makers in warning of a weak consumer environment in the United States and Europe (Jessica Newman writes).

Brown-Forman reported yesterday net sales of $911 million in the three months to the end of July, 1 per cent lower than the same period a year earlier and slightly below the $914 million analysts had forecast.

The Kentucky-based company said whiskey sales were flat over the period due to weak demand for premium brands such as Gentleman Jack, while organic sales in its tequila portfolio fell by 13 per cent, driven by lower volumes in the US.

However, net sales for its ready-to-drink products rose by 11 per cent on an organic basis, driven by New Mix, its popular Mexican ready-made tequila-based drink that was recently launched in the US.

Lawson Whiting, its chief executive, said momentum from New Mix, its ready-to-drink portfolio and Jack Daniel's Tennessee Blackberry had helped to offset pressures elsewhere in the business.

Despite reaffirming the company's annual organic net sales forecasts of flat growth, the company warned that the operating environment for the year ahead remained tough "as macroeconomic pressures and geopolitical instability continue to negatively impact consumer behaviour and beverage alcohol consumption, particularly within developed markets".

The Brown family has controlled Brown-Forman since its creation in 1870. Fifth-generation descendants of the founder George Garvin Brown sit on the executive board and the family — with well over 100 members including spouses — commands at least 67.5 per cent of voting rights, analysts estimate.

The family has long resisted takeovers. In July Brown-Foreman's board concluded an unsolicited $32-per-share cash offer takeover bid from Sazerac, whose 500 brands include Southern Comfort and Fireball, was "not actionable."

Wolf Pen Branch, a group of Brown family members representing a majority of Brown-Forman's class A shares, said it remained confident in the company's brands, adding Sazerac's proposal did not align with its vision for Brown-Forman's future.

Earlier this year, Brown-Forman and Pernod Ricard confirmed they were in discussions about a possible merger in March, a move that would have united the world's second-largest spirits maker with the largest producer of American whiskey. However, the pair ended merger discussions in April, having failed to agree on mutually acceptable terms.

Brown-Forman, the Kentucky-headquartered maker of Jack Daniel's, said whiskey sales were flat

THE BUSINESS PODCAST

Bond market turmoil

A special edition of The Business podcast examines the extraordinary events in the markets for government debt. What is driving yields - the cost of state borrowing - up, and what does it mean for Andy Burnham's debut budget? And will Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent's intervention succeed in driving down US bond yields, or is he, as critics say, doomed to failure.

Times Radio's Dominic O'Connell talks to Mehreen Khan, economics editor of The Times, and Chris Jeffery, head of macrostrategy at Legal & General about the causes of the bond blues, what is moving the market, and what will happen next.

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Taunton TA1 5NF
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Robert Stephens ***Tempus***
Buy, sell or hold: today's best share tips

Copper-bottomed stock is still a must

ANTOFAGASTA

Market cap £37.7bn | **First-half revenue** $4.5bn

The mining company Antofagasta is inherently volatile. The FTSE 100 member's recently released half-year results, for example, confirmed that heavy rain at one of its locations had prompted a temporary shutdown in production that materially reduced its output guidance for the full year.

It had expected to produce 650,000-700,000 tonnes of copper this year, but now that figure is a more modest 625,000-655,000 tonnes.

The company's financial performance, furthermore, is closely linked to a highly changeable copper price. Although the metal's price rose by 36 per cent during the first half of the year, which contributed to an 81 per cent surge in Antofagasta's earnings per share (EPS), short-term periods of decline in the price of copper have previously had a negative effect on its bottom line.

Given all of the above equates to a share price that is in a seemingly permanent state of flux, as evidenced by a beta of 1.9, should stock-market investors look elsewhere when seeking index-beating capital returns?

Antofagasta started life in 1888 as a railway company that raised money on the London Stock Exchange to fund a project that connected its namesake port in northern Chile with La Paz in Bolivia. After the sale of industrial and banking interests in more recent years, it has emerged as a focused mining company operating almost exclusively in Chile.

While copper accounts for 76 per cent of its revenue, gold, silver and molybdenum also contribute to its top line alongside modest transport and shipping revenues. The company's £38 billion market capitalisation makes it the 21st largest stock in the FTSE 100.

Antofagasta's inherent volatility may dissuade some investors from buying it. However, paper losses do not equate to an elevated risk of permanent capital loss for long-term investors who are able to ride out periods of temporary share-price decline. Indeed, Antofagasta has an excellent balance sheet through which to overcome challenges such as adverse weather conditions, highly changeable commodity prices and an uncertain global economic outlook. Its net debt-to-equity ratio amounts to just 26 per cent, while net interest costs were covered nearly 32 times by operating profits during the first half of the current financial year.

In return for a fluctuating share price, long-term investors are likely to experience capital gains. Demand for copper is set to rise over the coming years because the renewable energy infrastructure and electric vehicles that form a central part of the world's push to achieve net zero require vast amounts of the metal.

When combined with limited large discoveries of copper over recent years, as well as declining ore grades, this should lead to a rising price that catalyses Antofagasta's financial and share price performance.

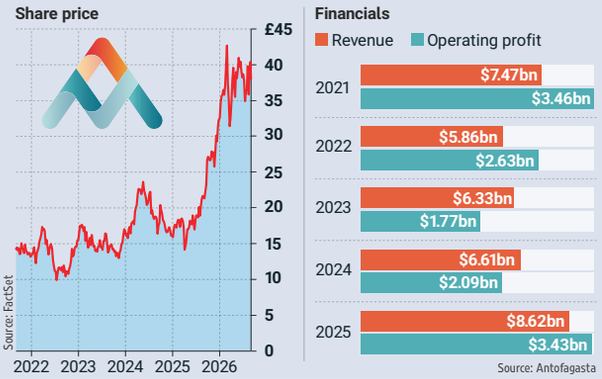
Similarly, a prospective fall in inflation across several developed economies over the medium term should provide scope for interest rate cuts that, once time lags have passed, stimulate the world economy's growth rate. This should have a positive impact on demand for copper, and therefore its price, due to the metal's widespread use in highly cyclical sectors such as construction and industrials that are likely to be among the biggest beneficiaries of improved GDP growth.

Antofagasta's half-year results also showed it continues to advance its big projects. They are set to deliver a 30 per cent rise in copper production over the medium term and therefore contribute to a 26 per cent annualised rise in EPS over the next two financial years. While this is a much faster pace of increase vis-à-vis the FTSE 100's typical growth rate, investors must pay a premium price for it. After a 78 per cent share price rise over the past year, the company trades on a price-to-earnings (P/E) ratio of 39.5. Given this is more than double the earnings multiple of the UK's large-cap index, which stands at 18, Antofagasta lacks significant upward rerating potential.

However, its long-term EPS growth prospects and sound fundamentals suggest further index-beating capital gains lie ahead. Although their delivery is likely to be anything but smooth, investors in the stock who can overlook severe price fluctuations in the short run are likely to be well rewarded in the long run.

ADVICE Buy
WHY Upbeat long-term outlook for copper price should drive the stock's performance

Miner detail



NEWS IN BRIEF

Dutch gold's new UK home

The Dutch central bank said yesterday it had moved 86 tonnes of its gold reserves out of the United States and Canada to London, citing "increasing geopolitical unrest".

The DNB said gold reserves held in London could be traded more easily than those in New York and Ottawa.

"This makes it the quickest for DNB to deploy in a crisis situation," it said. "With this step, we have improved the deployability of the gold reserves. We assume that we will never need to deploy the gold, but it is nevertheless necessary to strengthen our resilience and preparedness," Olaf Sleijpen, the president of DNB, said.

The total Dutch gold stock amounted to 612.4 tonnes and was valued at €72.2 billion at the end of 2025, the bank said. Before the deployment, the Dutch bank held 31.3 per cent of its gold in New York and 19.7 per cent in Ottawa. After the move, each country accounted for 18.5 per cent of the Dutch gold reserve.

The share of gold held in London rose from 18.1 per cent to 32.1 per cent. The central bank still holds 30.8 per cent of its gold in the Netherlands. The transfer was carried out partly by buying and selling and partly by transferring gold. The bank moved more than 27 tonnes of physical gold from the US and Canada to Zeist. The same quantity of gold was moved from Zeist to London, preventing the melting down of gold bars.

Changes at TT pay off

The benefits of a shake-up at TT Electronics were evident in the half-year results. The components manufacturer now expects its annual operating profit to be above the analysts' consensus forecast of £35 million. After organisational changes, operating profits were up by more than a third to £18.5 million on revenues that were down a little at £228 million in the six months to the end of June. The company secured contracts with customers including Rolls-Royce. Its products are used in aerospace, healthcare and other sectors. The shares closed up 14½p, or 10.7 per cent, to 149½p.

Kelso back in profit

Kelso, a listed acquisition vehicle with stakes in CVS, the vet group, and The Works, a discount retailer, has reported its net asset value per share increased to 2.9p at the end of June, up from 2.3p at the end of 2025. The activist investor said its pre-tax profit rose to £2.3 million in the half-year to end of June, with net assets rising to £13.2 million against a loss of £55,000 in the same period a year ago. The group attributed the performance to its "highly focused" portfolio, of ten stakes in small and medium-sized companies. Sir Nigel Knowles, the chairman, said: "Kelso may be small, but its ambition is considerable."

SFO settles ENRC lawsuit

The Serious Fraud Office has settled a lawsuit brought by ENRC, the Kazakh mining group, which accused the agency and law firm Dechert of causing it big losses during a criminal inquiry. The settlement, announced by ENRC and Dechert, seemingly brings to an end a more than ten-year legal saga after the SFO began an investigation into alleged bribery by ENRC to secure mining contracts in the Democratic Republic of Congo between 2009 and 2012, which the company denied. The SFO dropped its investigation in 2023 with no criminal charges. It said there was "insufficient admissible evidence to prosecute".

Stock market set for its snakes-and-ladders day

MARKET REPORT

The simple rule of the equity market jungle is that when you are in the top-flight FTSE 100, you are more attractive to investors both private and institutional and particularly to passive index tracker funds (Robert Miller writes).

So the latest quarterly review by FTSE Russell, the London Stock exchange group's index provider, published after markets closed last night, will cause a flurry of activity in the days ahead leading up to the promotions and demotions before they take effect on Monday, September 21.

Leading the way will be **easyJet**, returning just six months after it was demoted to the lower ranks of the FTSE 250. The budget airline has been the subject of a bidding battle between investment firms Apollo and Castlelake. The latter walked away from talks last month after Apollo put down a higher offer to pay shareholders 715p a share for the business.

The takeover is expected to complete in the first quarter of 2027, which would mean being taken off the London Stock Exchange and into private ownership. In the meantime, however, the shares enjoyed a mid-week rise of 4p, or 0.6 per cent, to end the day at 673¼p.

Wall Street report

Although investors remain worried by rising prices, government debt and the impact of the Gulf conflict on economic growth, indices had a mid-week bounce after two days of losses. AI-related stocks led the way with chip designer Nvidia up 3.3 per cent and computer memory seller Micron Technology up 2.4 per cent. The Nasdaq rose 118.05 points, or 0.5 per cent, to 26,217.83 as the S&P 500 gained 35.13 points, or 0.5 per cent, to 7,666.60. The Dow Jones industrial average was up 295.07 points, or 0.6 per cent, to 53,061.95.

The day's biggest movers

Company	Change
InterContinental Hotels	3.1%
Fresnillo	1.9%
Endeavour Mining	1.9%
Convatec	1.7%
Standard Chartered	1.6%
London Stock Exchange Group	-3.0%
Experian	-3.2%
Metlen Energy & Metals	-3.2%
Computacenter	-3.5%
Kingfisher	-3.8%

ALAIN JOCARD/AFP

The luxury carmaker Aston Martin Lagonda has lost its place on the FTSE 250

Joining the airline in the top tier will be **Ithaca Energy**, the oil and gas company operating in the North Sea. This includes a 20 per cent interest in the Rosebank field, which is subject to regulatory approval for first oil in the first half of 2027. The stock enjoyed a decent gain, up 6½p, or 2.3 per cent, to close at 286p, but that was no doubt helped by a 0.8 per cent rise in the price of Brent crude to $95.35.

The risers weren't enough, however, to save the FTSE 100 from another days of losses with a fall of 32.83 points, or 0.3 per cent, to 10,756.45.

The more UK-focused FTSE 250 also had a down day with a drop 197.23 points, or 0.8 per cent, to 24,324.06.

Making way for the new promotions in the top tier will be Ladbrokes and Coral owner **Entain** actually 2½p, or 0.5 per cent, higher on the day at 517½p and housebuilder **Persimmon**, down 12p, or 1 per cent, at £11.38.

And a sad footnote for **Aston Martin Lagonda**. The luxury carmaker has lost its place on the FTSE 250.

The shares, which rose 1¼p, or 3.5 per cent, to 34½p, floated on the London market in 2018 at £19.

Business

EQUITY PRICES

Dividend yields Please note dividend yields are supplied by ICE Data Services. The yield is the sum of a company's annual 12-month dividend payments divided by the last day's closing share price.
12-month high and low High/low prices for UK equities and investment trusts are based on intra-day figures.

Automobiles & Part

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
86¾	33	Aston Martin Lag	34⅜	+1⅛	...	-0.7

Banking & Finance

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
265	177½	**Aberdeen Group‡**	243¼	-1¾	6.0	11.3
1¼	0⅝	Acuity RM♦	0¾		...	-3.5
4128	2624	**Admiral**	3934	-2	3.6	16.0
662½	414⅜	AJ Bell	594½	-11½	2.5	23.2
28761⅛	22372¾	AON Corp	24486½	+403⅜	1.0	...
1100	765	Arbuthnot♦‡	790	-10	7.0	7.2
276½	145⅞	Ashmore Group	214	-4⅝	7.9	17.6
2126½	1590½	Australia & NZ	1991⅜	+17⅞	5.8	19.3
740⅝	590⅝	**Aviva**	731⅜	-⅜	5.5	27.2
1122	690	Banco Santander	1086	+10	1.5	13.9
554⅛	353½	**Barclays‡**	483½	-2⅝	2.4	11.0
17	4	Blue Star Capital♦	5¼		...	-2.7
710	613	BP Marsh & Ptnrs♦	680		5.3	5.1
351½	212	Bridgepoint Grp	298¾	-12¾	3.2	59.8
378	264⅝	Chesnara	369	-1	6.2	-73.1
496	349	City of London Grp	471	-11	7.0	15.9
556⅛	318⅜	Close Bros	422¾	+8	...	-6.3
753	203	CMC Markets	727	-5	1.9	26.4
3030¼	2057	Deutsche Bank	2996	+67½	2.9	11.0
93	74	EFG-Hermes Hldgs	74	+¼	0.9	...
240¼	136	EPE Special Opps♦	211		...	8.7
85	52	Fiske♦	67½		1.7	5.9
92	80	Foresight Ventures VCT	83		4.3	15.5
4700	2230	Georgia Capital	4355	+55	...	2.7
57	43¼	Hansard Global	52½	-1	8.5	40.4
230	194	Helios U/W♦	227½		4.4	7.8
1904	1257⅛	**Hiscox‡**	1862	-6	2.1	13.9
1610	946¼	**HSBC‡**	1545¼	+11¾	3.6	17.2
1956	1016	**IG Group‡**	1356	-22	3.1	9.4
200	90⅞	Impax Asset Mgmt♦	106¾	-1¾	9.4	6.7
2340	1424⅞	**ICG**	1916	-31	4.5	11.5
145¾	115⅝	Intl Public P'ship‡	137	-1	6.4	-7.9
690	499⅜	**Investec‡**	661½	+3½	5.8	8.6
78	60	Investment Co	77		...	...
75	48	IP Group	67½	-2¼	1.9	9.3
24	6	Jarvis Securities♦	7		50.0	2.2
214½	113⅜	Jupiter Fund Mgmt‡	163¾	-1¾	3.7	8.5
700	549	Lancashire Hldgs‡	621	-4	2.7	6.9
318⅛	217¼	**Legal & General‡**	287⅜	-2⅞	7.6	28.8
13620	6905	**Lion Finance Group**	13360	-70	2.4	9.4
358	223	Liontrust Asset Mgmt	297	-7½	6.4	19.3
61	35	Livermore Invs Grp♦	38¾	+1¼	8.1	17.4
117⅞	77⅜	**Lloyds Banking‡**	110½	-⅛	3.6	15.8
22	14	LMS Capital	15⅝		25.6	...
10140	6684	**London Stock Exch‡**	8568	-268	1.8	35.9
367⅛	247	**M&G**	343⅛	-2⅞	6.0	27.2
327¼	154¼	Man Group‡	300¼	-¾	4.2	26.3
38¾	20	Manx Financial Grp♦	24		2.1	4.4
10	1¼	Marechale Capital♦	4¾	-¼	...	-5.7
186⅜	98¼	Metro Bank	174¾	+4¾	...	22.4
2621¼	1864⅝	National Australia	2048⅛	+13⅜	4.4	17.5
726	500¼	**NatWest Group‡**	686⅝	+3¾	5.1	12.8
833⅞	438⅜	PayPoint‡	640½	-4½	6.2	10.8
1238	910¼	**Prudential**	1003½	+3	2.0	8.8
1¼	0¼	Quantum Blockchain♦	0¼		...	-1.5
209	150¾	Quilter‡	185¾	-3⅞	3.4	20.9
2500	1580	Rathbones Group	1666	-40	6.0	15.4
327	245	Rockwood Strategic	324	+½	...	0.0
2458½	1620	S & U	1980	-20	5.8	10.1
3	0¼	Sancus Lending♦	1		...	6.6
59⅛	41¼	Schroder REIT‡	41⅞	-⅝	8.6	...
599½	358⅝	**Schroders**	584		3.8	17.1
1575½	1038¾	**St James's Place‡**	1144	-22½	1.6	11.5
2278	1351½	**Standard Chart'd‡**	2204	+35	2.3	15.2
948½	615	**Standard Life**	908	-13	6.1	-192.8
6347⅛	4284⅝	Sun Life Canada‡	5824	+62¼	3.5	...
6¾	2¾	Tavistock Invs♦	3		3.4	2.5
5200	3615	TBC Bank Grp‡	5015	+65	5.2	7.0
1¾	0¼	Tern♦	1¼		...	-1.4
60	40⅛	Time Finance♦	57⅜		...	9.1
0⅜	0⅛	Tooru♦	0¼		...	-1.9
4	1½	Truetide♦	3⅜	+⅛	...	-6.0
132	75	Vanquis Banking Gp	81½		...	25.5
2800	2000	Volvere♦	2150		...	11.4
7239⅝	5453⅛	Wells Fargo	6572⅜	+143¼	2.3	...
2275⅜	1755¾	Westpac Bkg Corp	1825¾	+9¾	4.5	17.1
31¾	23	Worsley Investors	28¼		...	...
57550	49947¼	Zurich Insurance	54124	-82½	5.0	18.6

Construction & Property

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
357	181	Alumasc♦	227½		4.9	8.8
6⅝	4½	Aseana Properties	5⅛		...	1.3
2½	1¼	Built Cybernetics♦	1⅞		...	-190.0
973	579½	Balfour Beatty	860½	-11½	1.7	16.4
410¼	235⅜	**Barratt Redrow**	304½	-8⅛	5.6	22.4
2890	1715	Bellway	2090	-36	3.4	15.7
4442	2796	Berkeley	3420	-52	...	10.3
1208	800½	Big Yellow Grp	838½	-5½	5.6	...
460	233	Billington Hldgs♦	407½		2.7	39.2
236	133½	Boot (Henry)	150	-4	5.2	8.5
374¼	271⅜	Breedon	325¾	-15¼	4.7	13.5
451⅝	318⅝	**British Land**	413	-6⅜	5.6	...
2900	2500	Cardiff Property	2750		1.1	20.7
2196	1469⅜	Derwent London	1970	-28	4.2	...
5½	4⅛	DCI Advisors♦	4¾		...	-2.8
19½	11	First Property♦‡	13½		1.9	7.5
75	29	Fletcher King♦	42½		5.3	28.7
62	31¾	Foxtons Group‡	37⅞	+⅝	3.1	8.8
640	407½	Galliford Try Hldgs	594	-11	3.4	17.6
391½	241	Genuit Group‡	262⅝	-5⅜	4.9	14.4
435	221	Gleeson (MJ)	266	-4	4.1	9.8
1063	788⅝	Grafton Grp Units	1011¼	-19	3.7	14.4
202¾	149½	Grainger	167⅜	-¾	5.0	6.1
377	270	Great Portland Est	328	-4⅝	2.5	0.0
391¾	263⅜	Hammerson	367	-5¼	5.0	...
185	116¾	Harworth Group	175	-1⅝	1.0	60.3
400	215½	Heath (Samuel)♦‡	245		5.3	30.6
236¼	180⅝	Helical	199	-1	1.3	41.2
143¾	82⅞	Ibstock‡	83½	-⅞	2.4	...
161½	112	James Halstead♦	133¼	-1¾	6.7	13.7
3518	1238	Keller‡	3012	-18	2.7	14.9
8704⅝	8541½	Kingspan Group	8563		0.6	27.0
726	522½	**Land Securities**	656	-15	6.3	...
216¼	175¼	**LondonMetric Prop‡**	182¼	-1¾	6.9	...
19⅛	4¼	Macau Prop Opp Fd	4⅝	-¼	...	-0.3
184¼	124	Marshalls	158⅝	-3½	4.4	27.8
101	66	Michelmersh Brick♦	74½		6.2	18.5
1	0⅜	Mindflair♦	0⅜		...	-1.3
5730	3915	Morgan Sindall	4170	-84	3.9	11.2
10200	8350	Mountview Estates	8650	-100	6.1	16.6
85	65¾	NewRiver REIT	78⅝	-¼	8.5	...
226	160	Palace Capital	185½		8.1	41.2
320	261	Panther Securities♦	290		4.1	11.8
1552	947⅜	**Persimmon**	1138	-12	5.3	12.7
24	15	Plaza Centers	14½		...	-0.1
109⅝	87⅜	Primary Health Props	93⅛	-¾	7.8	...
33⅜	28	Real Estate Inv♦	31½	+¼	4.8	-63.0
849½	554½	Safestore	575	-3	5.4	...
1142	791½	Savills‡	1008	-14	2.3	19.4
5½	0¼	Secure Prop Dev & Inv♦	0½		...	-0.1
997⅜	603	**Segro‡**	943	-10¼	3.3	...
155⅛	124⅛	Shaftesbury Capital‡	143⅞	-1½	3.0	7.7
10¾	6¾	SIG	9¼	-⅛	...	-1.7
153	105	SigmaRoc♦	120⅞	-4¼	...	16.6
113	86¾	Sirius Real Estate	92½	-1¼	5.9	7.1
140	106	Smart (J)	115	-5	2.8	8.8
23¾	16	Steppe Cement♦	21	-½	...	18.8
116⅞	74⅛	Taylor Wimpey	81½	-1½	5.1	29.1
139	104	Town Centre	129	+1	3.9	...
723½	493⅜	Travis Perkins	612	-20	1.9	-7.3
175	132¼	**Tritax Big Box‡**	151¾	-2½	5.4	...
729½	442¼	Unite Group	491⅝	-⅜	7.7	...
746⅜	220	Vistry Group	283¼	-8¼	...	6.7
434⅜	312	Workspace Group	361¾	-8⅜	7.2	...
930	730	Wynnstay Props♦	905		3.1	12.6

Consumer Goods

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
229	117⅜	AEP Plantations	202		3.0	11.8
30	17⅝	Airea♦	27		3.7	10.6
2359	1729½	**AB Foods**	2031	-10	3.1	14.3
715⅜	585	Barr (AG)	585	-7	3.2	13.8
5326	3677	**British Amer Tob**	4126	-48	5.9	11.8
1376½	976	**Burberry Group**	1075½	+5½	...	...
173¼	85⅜	C&C Group	94	+½	5.3	...
5⅞	3	Capital Metals♦	4		...	-33.3
460	271	Churchill China♦	360		5.8	9.1
5195	3270	**Coca-Cola HBC**	4580	-14	2.2	20.6
1515¾	821	Colefax♦	1410	-30	0.4	10.0
5810	4775	Cranswick	5260	-80	2.1	17.8
2071	1295½	**Diageo**	1693	+21½	2.2	29.3
0¼	0	Distil♦	0		...	-0.6
1918	1160	Evans (M.P.)♦	1802		3.3	11.2
149½	114½	Fevara	137	-1½	1.8	5.9
23540	14070	**Games Workshop‡**	18090	-220	3.2	29.0
2185⅜	1147⅞	Glanbia‡	1974⅜	+21½	1.9	36.4
307½	191⅛	Greencore	257	-3	1.0	19.5
72¾	4⅝	Headlam#	10½		...	-0.1
834	447⅞	Hilton Food	631	+½	5.5	7.2
3632	2476	**Imperial Brands‡**	2518	-33	6.6	10.0
7646⅜	5567¾	Kerry Group	7331⅛	+119⅛	1.7	21.3
214⅛	106¼	McBride	193⅝	-2⅝	1.5	9.9
260	85	Mulberry Group♦	255		...	-19.6
1240	880	Nichols♦‡	1150	-20	3.4	19.6
374	252	Norcros	316	-7	3.6	...
387	309	Origin Ents♦	382½		3.9	9.0
1	0¼	PACSCo♦	0⅜		...	-0.0
138	47⅛	Portmeirion♦	53		...	-1.2
1½	0½	Provexis♦	1⅛		...	-53.8
114	65⅛	PZ Cussons	103⅜	+⅜	3.6	22.0
138	92	REA	110		...	-212.2
210	155	Tandem♦	180		1.7	11.6
320	220	The Character Grp♦	316	+1	2.2	-46.9
82⅞	5	Ukrproduct Grp♦	7⅝	+⅛	...	-17.7
5542⅛	3644	**Unilever‡**	4782½	-28½	3.4	12.9
76½	19½	Victoria♦	58	+1⅜	...	-0.2

Engineering

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
59⅛	10	Assoc Brit Eng	20		...	-6.9
2180	1458	Avon Technologies‡	1820	+20	1.0	70.4
1527	902⅜	**Babcock‡**	1004	-20	0.7	23.8
2360	1529	**BAE Systems**	1987½	-29½	1.9	28.9
1500	500	Braime A N/V♦	1250		1.3	6.6
2490	1376	Braime Group♦	2350		0.7	12.5
550	350	Caffyns	500		2.0	-12.3
0⅜	0⅛	Cap XX Ld♦	0⅛		...	-3.4
340	202¼	Castings	308	+2	6.0	17.7
27	12⅜	Checkit♦	21	+1	...	-8.1
650¾	446½	Chemring Group‡	533	+1	1.5	29.9
55	28⅛	Chesterfield Spec Cyl♦	37		...	-41.1
1538	881⅛	Cohort♦‡	1182	+18	1.5	22.6
626	195	Dialight	580	+6	...	...
15	5¾	Feedback♦	6⅞		...	-0.3
1270	463⅛	Gooch & Housego♦	1195	-10	1.1	87.2
28500	9292⅝	Goodwin	17720	-140	1.9	24.0
4902	3194	**Halma**	3568	+40	0.7	36.2
3220	1994	Hill & Smith	2880	-20	...	28.0
3	1¼	Image Scan♦	2¾		...	-13.3
3166	2216	**IMI‡**	3042	-12	1.2	24.5
6700	3480	Judges Sci.♦	4150	+45	2.8	50.2
90	34	LPA♦	77½		...	-29.4
685	409⅞	**Melrose‡**	486⅛	-8¾	1.5	16.8
261	179¾	Morgan Advanced	234½	-5	5.2	31.3
405	200	Mpac♦	342½		...	-10.8
1800	1120	MS Intl♦‡	1650	-50	1.6	24.5
3318	1682	Oxford Instruments	2690	-34	0.9	31.8
2413⅜	1779⅛	Phillips Elec	1977	+10⅞	3.7	-46.1
4⅛	1	PipeHawk♦	1⅞		...	-2.7
5490	3110	Renishaw	4858	-2	1.6	42.2
1586	990	**Rolls-Royce‡**	1469	+9¾	0.7	21.2
489¼	286⅜	Rotork‡	485		1.7	35.1
105	60	SDI Group♦	87½	-2	...	18.6
318⅛	161	Senior	294		0.7	-288.2
2062⅛	2015⅝	SKF Group	2037⅛		2.9	30.7
2754⅛	2088	**Smiths**	2538	-19	1.8	29.6
215	135	Solid State♦	189½		1.5	26.3
250	170	Somero Enter♦	232½	-7½	3.3	16.5
8050	5950	**Spirax Group**	6870	-40	2.5	31.0
7½	3½	Tanfield♦	4¼		...	-4.2
320	240	Thorpe FW♦	261	-9	2.7	12.0
142¾	45	Transense Tech♦	45½		...	4.9
507½	350	Vesuvius	381⅝	-1⅝	6.2	18.1
710	325	Volex‡	582	-12	0.8	22.3
3580	2254	**Weir**	2656	-50	1.6	27.8
2060	843	XP Power	1780	+4	...	-42.4

Health

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
284½	187	Advanced Medical♦	281	+½	1.0	60.8
12⅛	5	Allergy Therapeutics♦	5⅜	-⅛	...	-6.5
8	0⅞	CelLBxHealth♦	1⅛	-⅛	...	-0.2
580	391⅛	Anpario♦	535		2.3	13.3
15732	9892	**AstraZeneca‡**	11976	+14	2.0	24.5
3½	1⅝	Cambridge Nutri Sci♦	1⅞		...	2.6
259¼	193	**Convatec‡**	233⅝	+3¾	2.4	36.7
34	20	Potter & Moore♦‡	22		2.5	7.2
116⅞	72	Eco Animal Health♦	98½		...	30.2
32	21¾	EKF Diagnostics♦	25¼	+¼	...	53.8
10½	0¼	Futura Medical♦	0⅜		...	-0.1
3228¾	1943	Genus	2290	-30	1.4	78.2
2282	1440¼	**GSK‡**	1861½	-10	3.8	13.2
0¼	0⅛	Gunsynd♦	0⅛		...	-2.1
416⅛	274⅜	**Haleon‡**	366	-3⅞	2.0	19.7
1865	1187	Hikma Pharma‡	1615		3.9	12.0
266	150½	Hutchmed China♦	179½	+2½	...	4.6
19⅜	3¼	ImmuPharma♦	3½	-⅛	...	-9.5
32	12¼	Inspiration Health♦	19	-¼	...	-16.4
15	6¼	IXICO♦	7½		...	-4.1
1	0⅜	Thalia Therapeutics♦	0⅝		...	-3.7
76	53⅞	NIOX Group♦	67⅝	-⅜	2.3	40.0
132.60	96.03	Novartis	CHF131.32	+0.36	2.8	43.1
962	424	Oxford Biomedica	424	-23	...	-15.8
0¾	0¼	Physiomics♦	0½		...	-3.0
4⅜	1¼	Proteome Sciences♦	1⅜		...	-1.3
6522⅞	3664	**Reckitt Benck‡**	5226	-134	4.1	11.2
29⅞	10⅜	RUA Life Sci♦	26½	-½	...	-113.7
40	9½	Sareum Holdings♦	35		...	-14.6
1441½	1041½	**Smith & Neph**	1062½	-7½	2.8	19.9
256½	140¾	Spire Healthcare	236	-1	0.6	57.6
14	5	Talisman Metals♦	7		...	2.0
0⅞	0⅛	ValiRx♦	0⅛		...	-0.3

Industrials

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
79⅞	58⅛	Accsys Tech♦	70	+1	...	30.5
4780½	3665⅛	BASF	4580⅝	+54¾	4.2	29.3
4606¾	2268½	Bayer	4227⅞	+55⅝	0.2	-13.4
98⅛	73⅛	Coats Group	78	-⅞	3.2	17.8
3520¼	2437	**Croda‡**	3352	-8	3.3	75.5
540	233	Cropper (James)♦	495	-15	...	16.1
195⅜	136	Elementis‡	174⅝	+¾	1.9	-30.2
110	6¼	Hardide♦	86½	-1¾	...	...
3775	2095	International Paper‡	2740	-5	5.0	-6.9
3245¼	2224	Johnson Matthey	2242	-38	4.6	-29.4
1058	660	Mondi‡	855⅜	-5⅜	1.4	26.6
169⅞	110	Robinson♦	127½		4.7	9.4
1002	597	Swire Pacific	998	+2⅜	3.8	48.7
11	5½	Symphony Enviro♦	6¾	-¼	...	-6.2
124	16¾	Synthomer	104¼	+2¼	...	-1.1
2858¼	2026⅝	Takeda Pharma	2717¼	+20⅜	3.5	-60.2
860⅛	515	Victrex	849	+8	7.0	26.5
430	320	Wynnstay♦	365	-5	4.9	36.9
479⅞	318½	Zotefoams	445	-1½	1.8	9.6

Leisure

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
451	231	Accesso Tech♦	301½	-11½	...	14.6
260	160	Celtic♦	185		...	5.2
221⅝	164	Domino's Pizza‡	206¾	-2	5.5	13.7
915⅝	500⅜	**Entain‡**	517⅝	+2⅜	3.9	-5.0
60¼	19¾	Evoke	44¼	-⅝	...	-0.4
51	29	Gaming Realms♦	29¾	-¼	...	14.6
310	210	Heavitree♦	305		2.2	5.6
244	130	Heavitree A♦	195		3.4	3.6
175.70	115.99	**InterCont'l Hotels‡**	$160.80	+4.90	1.2	32.8
301½	223½	Mitch & Butlers	276½	-3½	...	9.3
289	129⅜	On The Beach	181¼	-3	2.2	32.9
144¼	86	Rank Group	102	+1⅜	3.4	15.9
219⅜	137¼	SSP	193⅞	-3¼	2.3	-20.8
0⅝	0¼	Bow Street Group♦	0⅜		...	-0.3
865	530½	Wetherspoon JD	825	-15	1.5	13.8
3302	2098	**Whitbread**	2396	+9	4.0	19.4

Media

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
76⅛	51⅛	Aeorema Comms♦	64½		4.1	51.2
29	18	Altitude Group♦	23		...	-92.0
115	70¼	Arcontech Group♦	78½		5.1	11.1
828¾	418⅝	**Autotrader‡**	500¾	-4¾	2.3	14.7
690	435	Bloomsbury Pub	620	-2	2.6	18.7
3½		Caledonian Hldgs♦	1¼		...	-0.1
60	40	Catalyst Media♦	42½		...	23.1
0⅝	0⅛	Catenai♦	0⅛		...	-2.6
20	9	Ebiquity♦	9⅝		...	-0.9
776	262¼	Future	303⅜	-¼	5.6	4.8
154	60⅝	GlobalData	76½	-¾	2.0	17.4
110	44	IG Design Group♦	97	-½	1.0	-0.8
1000	719	**Informa‡**	878⅝	-9¾	2.6	...
87⅜	65¾	ITV	70¼	-⅛	7.1	11.9
200½	98½	ME Group	121¾	-2⅝	6.9	8.1
0⅛	0⅛	Mediazest♦	0⅛		...	13.4
27	12	Mission Group♦	21		...	-1.0
220¼	139¾	Mony Group‡	196⅛	-1¾	6.5	12.8
2341⅜	1624⅜	News Corp A	2277⅝	+7	0.7	...
2615¼	1891½	News Corp B	2575½	+43½	0.6	...
439½	217	Next 15 Group♦	304½	-1½	5.0	-10.2
1337	874¾	**Pearson‡**	1199	-27	2.1	23.3
4½	3	Primorus Inv♦	3⅜		...	5.0
73¾	40⅛	Reach‡	41½	-⅞	14.2	-1.0
59	40	React♦	41	+½	...	-28.3
3575	1991	**Relx‡**	2589	-43	2.7	23.0
747¼	391⅜	Rightmove	488	-10⅜	2.2	17.4
270	130	SpaceandPeople♦	135	+4	...	6.2
124½	95⅝	STV Group	109	-1	...	-10.1
444	170½	System1 Group♦	335		1.8	32.2
4874¼	4870¾	21st Cent Fox A‡	4870¾		0.9	...
3365⅛	3313⅜	21st Cent Fox B‡	3365⅛		1.3	...
369	230	Wilmington	285	+13	4.1	22.1
412⅝	218½	WPP	361¼	-8¾	4.2	7.2
71½	40	Zinc Media♦	56½		...	-5.5

Natural Resources

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
0⅛	0	ADM Energy#	0		...	1.2
17⅞	8⅛	H-Power♦	10½	-⅛	...	-4.4
89⅜	36¾	Afentra♦	77¼	+⅝	...	-74.6
0	0	Arkadian Strat Metals♦	0		...	-1.0
0¼	0⅛	Alien Metals♦	0⅛		...	-14.9
2⅞	0⅞	Aminex	2	+½	...	-23.1
8924	3413¼	Anglo Amer Plat	6310⅞	+15½	7.3	23.3
4321	2215	**Anglo Amer‡**	4134	+21	0.7	-16.9
435	173⅛	Anglo Asian Mng♦	407½		0.7	35.5
4475	2115	**Antofagasta**	3849	+21	1.5	38.6
1¼	0⅜	Arc Minerals♦	0¾		...	-1.5
2⅜	1¼	Ariana Resources♦	1⅝	+⅛	...	-160.0
0⅞	0¼	Arkle Resources♦	0¾		...	-10.2
2¼	0⅞	Asiamet Resources♦	1⅝		...	-14.1
1133	508	Atalaya Mine	1025	-16	1.0	19.6
4¾	2½	Beacon Energy♦	3⅛	-⅛	...	-0.7
13	4	Beowulf Mining♦	10½		...	-3.1

PRICES

Major indices

Index	Value
New York	
Dow Jones	53,061.95 (+295.07)
Nasdaq	26,217.83 (+118.05)
S&P 500	7,666.60 (+35.13)
Tokyo	
Nikkei 225	64325.64 (-1889.70)
Hong Kong	
Hang Seng	25311.21 (-18.52)
Amsterdam	
Amsterdam AEX	1103.67 (+1.75)
Sydney	
Australia AO	9160.30 (-100.60)
Frankfurt	
DAX	25839.33 (-130.78)
Singapore	
Singapore Straits	5744.11 (+33.74)
Brussels	
Brussels BEL20	5825.71 (-4.58)
Paris	
Paris CAC	8280.63 (-21.22)
Zurich	
Zurich SMI	14362.97 (+28.18)
Zurich DJ Euro Stoxx 50	6362.15 (-6.83)
London	
FTSE100	10756.45 (-32.83)
FTSE250	24324.06 (-197.23)
FTSE350	5857.60 (-21.08)
FTSE Eurotop 100	4996.04 (-6.42)
FTSE All Share	5793.71 (-20.77)
FTSE Non Financials	6346.16 (-30.52)
TechMark Focus	9247.71 (-134.66)
US$	1.3505 (-0.0033)
Euro	1.1649 (-0.0026)
SDR	0.9864 (-0.0028)
CPI Jul (2015=100)	142.9
RPI Jul (1987=100)	419.1
RPIX Jul (1987=100)	412.2

London Financial Futures

	Period	Open	High	Low	Sett	Vol	Open Int
Long Gilt	26-Sep	85.23	85.39	84.82	85.26	924	1558
	26-Dec	84.98	85.42	84.74	85.18	318286	1276548
	27-Mar	85.14	85.28	85.13	85.11	5	1
3-Mth Sonia Index	26-Jun	96.2525	96.2525	96.25	96.2525	4848	390444
	26-Sep	96.145	96.15	96.12	96.145	128436	434955
	26-Dec	95.825	95.865	95.795	95.845	191702	586764
	27-Mar	95.575	95.625	95.54	95.6	162325	396744
3 Mth Sonia Index	27-Jun	95.455	95.505	95.41	95.475	153084	382234
	27-Sep	95.415	95.47	95.365	95.435	116076	262096
	27-Dec	95.425	95.485	95.38	95.45	158652	312220
3-Mth Euribor	26-Sep	97.35	97.36	97.34	97.345	216573	645348
	26-Dec	97.125	97.15	97.115	97.135	299949	968240
	27-Mar	96.925	96.965	96.91	96.945	234104	514514
	27-Jun	96.82	96.865	96.805	96.845	263816	544367
	27-Sep	96.785	96.84	96.775	96.82	186930	493952
3-Mth Saron Index	26-Jun				100.0475	162	69043
	26-Sep	100.05	100.055	100.05	100.055	1883	68047
	26-Dec	100	100.01	99.995	100.005	4867	51462
	27-Mar	99.905	99.92	99.89	99.91	5222	40658
	27-Jun	99.8	99.815	99.775	99.805	2952	31579
	27-Sep	99.7	99.71	99.67	99.705	1897	28723
	27-Dec	99.61	99.63	99.58	99.62	1581	22287
FTSE100	26-Sep	10769	10821	10728.5	10777	63058	471512
	26-Dec	10840	10840	10840	10845	8	1476
FTSEurofirst 80	26-Sep				8662.8	0	
	26-Dec				8708.2	0	

Tradeweb

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Commodities

Natural gas $

2.975	+0.071

Light crude oil

90.75	+0.53

Crude oils ($/barrel FOB)

WTI NOV 26	88.13	0.38
WTI DEC 26	85.1	0.13
WTI JAN 27	82.37	-0.03
WTI FEB 27	80	-0.16
WTI MAR 27	78.08	-0.26

Products

Fuel Oil	518.826	12.776
Euro Naphtha	805.757	17.763

ICE futures

Gas oil

Sep1431.75-1430.75	Jan1174.5-1173.75
Oct1357-1356.5	Feb1136.75-1136.25
Nov1286-1285.5	
Dec1221.75-1221.25	Volume: 271673

Brent

Nov95.61-95.6	Feb86.37-86.35
Dec92.06-92.04	84.37-84.35
Jan88.93-88.92	Volume: 759326

Cocoa

Sep4483 -223	Sep4602 -228
Dec4578 -239	Dec4466 -221
Mar4707 -235	Mar4707 -235
May4696 -241	May4696 -241
Jul 4686 -233	Volume: 47961

Robusta coffee

Sep3417 -14	May3363 -58
Nov3408 -53	Jul 3346 -61
Jan3400 -54	
May3363 -58	Volume: 31901

White sugar

Oct539.4 +5.4	Aug530.1 +1.1
Dec538.2 +5.1	Oct521.4 -0.5
May538.9 +2.7	
May538.9 +2.7	Volume: 45661

London grain futures

Lliffe wheat (close £/t)

Nov 219 +2.5	May224.5 +1.25
Jan 218.75	Jul 225.25
Mar 221	Volume: 15284

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
0⅛	0	Bezant Resources♦	0⅛		...	12.1
3592	1918	BHP Group	3465	+6	3.7	24.2
14	7⅝	Border & Sthn Pet♦	11¼	-½	...	-95.2
122½	7⅞	Bougainville	8½		...	-12.7
609⅜	399⅜	**BP**‡	542½	+1¼	4.6	...
0	0	Buccaneer Energy♦	0		...	-0.6
8¼	1¾	Cadence Minerals♦	5½	-¼	...	-10.5
5½	3	Cadogan Energy	3¾		...	-11.3
2900	1250	Caledonia Mining♦‡	1855	-15	2.3	8.9
3⅜	1¾	Caspian Sunrise#	1⅞		...	3.5
244	125¼	Cent Asia Metals♦	175	+1	8.9	-5.6
2⅝	1⅛	Chariot Ltd♦	2½	+¼	...	...
0	0	Clontarf Energy♦	0		...	-6.2
0½	0¼	Corcel♦	0⅜		...	-2.3
18½	8	Crism Therapeutics♦	11¼		...	-2.2
300½	145⅞	DRD Gold	210¾	+4⅛	3.7	17.6
0½	0⅛	ECR Minerals♦	0⅛		...	-2.8
0⅛	0	Empyrean Energy♦	0		...	-0.3
5620	2598	**Endeavour**	4569	+85	2.9	22.0
28	9¾	EnQuest	27⅜	+1⅜	2.9	...
6	2	Eurasia Mining♦	2¼		...	14.7
2⅜	0⅝	Europa Oil & Gas♦	1⅞		...	-9.2
87¼	27¼	Ferrexpo#	28⅝		...	-4.5
4472	1825	**Fresnillo**‡	3074	+58	3.6	22.1
80	3	Galantas Gold♦	33½		...	-9.0
21½	2⅞	GCM Resources♦	16¾	+4¾	...	-23.9
8	2½	Gem Diamonds	6¼	+⅝	...	-0.1
3½	1⅝	Getech♦	3¼		...	-7.9
707¼	281⅞	**Glencore**‡	595⅞	-1¼	2.1	...
0½	0⅛	Geo Exploration#	0⅛		...	-4.3
4582¾	2310¼	Gold Fields	3359	-16	4.8	...
21	7½	Goldplat♦‡	17	-¾	3.9	28.3
2	0⅜	Goldstone Res♦	0½		...	-0.7
800	280	Greatland Resources♦	600	-1	...	8.8
353¾	176	Griffin Mining♦	282	-5	...	31.5
235	160⅝	Gulf Keystone	197¾	+¾	3.9	38.3
858	292¼	Hochschild	647	+20½	1.0	22.4
553	300	Hunting	405½	-10	2.5	20.9
0⅛	0	Ironveld♦	0		...	-2.4
219¾	57⅞	ITM Power♦	100¼	-1⅜	...	-13.6
5¼	2¼	Jubilee Metals♦	2½		...	-3.4
1⅛	0⅜	Karel Diamond Res♦	0¾		...	-4.7
2⅛	0⅝	KEFI Gold and Copper♦	1⅛		...	-10.6
325½	178⅜	Kenmare Res	190	+1⅝	...	-0.7
5⅞	1¾	Landore Res♦	2¼	+⅛	...	-2.3
0⅛	0⅛	Lansdowne Resources♦	0⅛		...	-1.3
4⅞	2⅝	Lexington Gold♦	2¾		...	-28.0
19¼	10¼	Metals Exploration♦	16¼	+¼	...	21.0
0¾	0⅛	Nativo Resources♦	0¼		...	-0.1
4½	0½	Nostrum Oil & Gas	0¾		...	-0.0
0½	0¼	Oriole Resources♦	0⅜		...	-16.2
		Ormonde Mining			...	...
41	13¼	Orosur Mining♦	15¼		...	...
190⅜	60½	Pan African Res	131¼	+2⅞	1.7	24.7
33⅛	6¾	Pantheon Res♦	10⅞	-⅜	...	-38.8
27	12½	Parkmead Group♦	23		...	3.4
21⅞	5	Petra Diamonds	5⅞	+½	...	-0.2
1⅛	0½	Petrel Resources♦	1		...	-4.4
1⅝	0⅝	Petro Matad♦	1		...	-4.7
8½	2¾	Plexus Holdings♦	3¾		...	-1.4
938	678⅞	Porvair	876	+18	0.8	22.3
5⅛	2⅛	Prospex Energy♦	4⅞	+⅝	...	-7.2
5	0⅞	Quadrise♦	1		...	-5.6
160	35	Reabold Resources♦	65½		...	-818.8
0	0	Red Rock Res♦	0		...	-0.3
10416¼	5502⅞	Rio Tinto Ltd‡	9284⅛	-97¾	3.7	17.6
9117	4528	**Rio Tinto**‡	7577	-4	4.5	16.7
0½	0⅛	Rome Resources♦	0¼		...	-12.7
375	195	Serabi Gold♦	285	-9	1.8	5.4
302⅜	146	Serica Energy♦	263⅜	+2⅝	6.1	-27.4
3758½	2553¾	**Shell**‡	3443	+10½	4.4	15.3
7	2¼	Shuka Minerals♦	3¼		...	-2.4
13	1½	Sound Energy♦	1¾		...	-1.5
27	5½	Star Energy♦	22		...	-3.9
4½	0⅞	Sunda Energy♦	3	-⅛	...	-3.0
0	0	Sunrise Resources♦	0		...	-3.3
0		Synergia Energy♦	0		...	0.5
0⅛	0	Tertiary Minerals♦	0⅛		...	-6.5
0⅞	0½	Thor Energy♦	0½		...	-0.6
7066	4293½	Total Eng SE	6721⅝	+74⅛	4.5	13.2
0	0	Tower Resources♦	0		...	-0.4
23	3½	Tullow Oil	22⅝	+1⅛	...	76.3
0	0	UK Oil & Gas♦	0		...	-0.2
13	2⅝	URU Metals♦	4		...	-2.7
9½	2⅛	Vast Resources♦	4		...	-0.7
9	1⅜	Westmount Energy♦	3¼		...	-8.6
1½	0½	Xtract Resources♦	1		...	-4.3
4⅜	2¼	Zephyr Energy♦	3		...	-6.9

Professional & Support Services

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
5135	2980	4imprint‡	4380	-18	4.1	14.6
615	464	Andrews Sykes♦	575		4.5	13.3
130	103½	BTG Consulting♦	110	+1	4.2	20.8
2898	1981	**Bunzl**	2714	-28	2.8	19.2
416	215	Capita	262½	-14½	...	-1.8
49⅞	25	CEPS♦	40½		...	-11.5
165	90	Christie Group♦	161		2.2	31.7
2581⅛	2000	**Compass**	2252½	-26¼	2.3	27.6
87	64½	Croma Security♦	71		3.4	12.4
6740	4188	**DCC Energy**	6330	-35	3.4	...
38	15	Diales Grp♦	36		4.2	27.7
7765	4970	**Diploma**	7135	+5	0.9	51.7
840	505	DiscoverIE	775	-4	1.7	25.7
115¼	78⅜	Essentra	108	-¼	1.9	...
3987	2203	**Experian**	2876	-94	1.8	23.6
330	110	FIH Group♦	155	-2½	4.4	3.4
868	588	Hargreaves Servs♦	844	+4	4.7	9.0
5860	3519⅜	**Intertek**	5845	+5	2.8	26.8
250¾	163½	Int'l Workplace	181¼	-3⅝	0.6	...
172⅛	123¾	Johnson Service	146	-⅜	3.3	15.7
554	360	Journeo♦	518	+13	...	21.3
263⅝	178⅝	Kier Group	249⅝	-3¾	3.1	19.5
1170	910	Latham (J)♦	1070		3.4	11.6
3800	2100	London Security♦	3650		2.7	18.8
298	204	LSL Property Servs	268	-7	4.3	16.1
97¾	59¾	Macfarlane	78		4.7	19.5
184	64½	Maintel Holdings♦	68½		...	-5.8
28	15¼	Malvern Intl♦	21½		...	-2.8
460	310	Mears Group	413½	-10½	4.4	7.4
260	101¼	Michael Page‡	214¼	-2⅝	2.2	73.9
214	134¾	Mitie Group	210		2.1	31.8
15¾	0¾	MobilityOne#	6¾		...	-2.1
137	77⅜	Newmark Security♦	108½		...	15.4
260	170	Norman Broadbent♦	204		...	6.4
158	84⅞	Northern Bear♦‡	112½		6.7	3.7
187½	110	NWF Group♦	152½		5.7	8.2
70	42	PCI-PAL♦	69	+3	...	...
12½	7	Petards♦	10		...	-14.9
12⅞	7	PHSC♦	7¾		...	-2.6
0⅝	0⅛	PowerHouse Energy♦	0¼		...	-3.0
62⅝	41⅜	Record	42½		8.5	10.8
989	772	Renew Holdings♦	960	-10	2.1	15.6
507	329⅝	**Rentokil**‡	355¼	-1⅝	2.6	25.8
310	222	Restore♦	286½	-4½	2.5	-61.0
7	1½	River Global A♦	2¼	-¼	...	-0.2
30	14	Roebuck Food Group♦	26		...	-9.0
764	536⅞	RS Group	740	-6½	3.1	21.4
150	85	RTC Group♦	95		7.1	6.7
127¼	68	RWS Holdings♦	118¾	-3¼	5.3	-4.4
612	520	Science Group♦	578		1.7	7.7
325¾	212¾	Serco‡	257	-2¼	1.8	17.9
79⅜	54¼	Smiths News	69⅜	-1⅝	8.0	5.9
27	13¼	Software Circel♦	15⅜	-⅛	...	-73.3
52½	36⅝	Staffline Group♦	42½	+1⅜	...	10.9
301	132¼	SThree	284½	-10½	5.0	20.8
350	146	Synectics♦	192½	-5	2.6	8.8
1⅞	0½	Thruvision Group♦	1¾	-⅛	...	-1.7
74	46	Tribal♦	63	+1	2.1	15.0
78¾	58	Vianet♦	66		3.6	46.2
490	294½	ZIGUP‡	433	-6	6.2	12.8

Retailing

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
117⅜	82½	AO World	90¾	-1¾	...	14.3
269¼	140	B&M European	228¾	-7⅝	4.2	14.0
115¾	58¼	Card Factory	74¾	-⅜	6.7	8.3
1648	1062	CVS Group	1289	-8	0.7	17.5
204	113	DFS Furniture	151	-5½	0.7	14.4
1246	707	Dunelm	832	-25½	8.4	10.8
845	598	Frasers Group	790	-30	...	9.1
2046	1407¼	Greggs	1845		3.7	15.4
276⅛	123¾	Halfords‡	265	-3	3.4	17.4
981	713	**Howden Joinery**	770½	-15	2.9	15.7
895	640½	Inchcape‡	843½		4.0	11.6
1⅜	0⅜	Imaging Biometrics	0¾		...	-4.7
106⅛	64	**JD Sports**	82	-2	1.5	9.5
372¼	240¼	**Kingfisher**	297½	-11¾	4.2	21.2
418⅜	301⅛	**Marks & Spencer**	384⅜	-7⅜	1.1	30.3
3⅞	0⅝	Mothercare♦	0¾		...	-0.8
91⅝	61¾	Naked Wines♦	69¾	+1¼	...	-7.6
15900	11200	**Next**	15175	-210	1.8	20.0
330⅝	140¼	Ocado	205⅜	-23	...	4.3
240¾	167¼	Pets at Home	210¼	-2⅜	3.5	15.2
575	200	Pinewood Tech Group	449½	-1	...	93.6
747	192¾	Saga	636	-10	...	...
380¼	292¼	**Sainsbury's**	334	-2⅝	4.1	19.3
712	378⅝	WH Smith	391¼	-13⅝	...	-3.5
14	4½	Sosandar♦	13¼		...	94.6
510⅜	411¾	**Tesco**	466⅞	-4⅝	3.1	17.0
50	30¼	Topps Tiles	36	+1¼	8.6	11.8

Technology

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
252	140⅜	Alfa Financial	162⅜	-4	5.9	15.9
307	195	Aptitude Software	220	+5	2.5	30.1
129	55	Bango♦	65	+½	...	-8.9
20	11⅝	BATM Adv Coms	11¾		...	-3.8
33	19⅞	Berkeley Res	25	-1	...	-24.1
3¼	0⅞	Blackbird♦	1⅛		...	-1.8
194	74	Celebrus Tech♦	91	-1½	3.7	-101.6
28	11¼	Cirata♦	11½	-1½	...	-2.6
0⅜	0⅛	CloudCoCo♦	0⅛		...	0.4
5685	2234	**Computacenter**	5315	-190	1.4	36.3
286	173½	Concurrent Tech♦	252½		0.5	43.1
13½	6½	Corero♦	8	+¾	...	-108.0
2644	988	Craneware♦	1390	+64	2.4	33.4
110	50	Crimson Tide♦	90		...	21.4
10	5¾	CyanConnode Hldgs♦	10		...	-8.5
15½	8	Dillistone Group♦	12½	+¼	...	-8.6
0½	0	Forgent♦	0		...	-0.0
165¾	94½	FDM Group	111¼	-¼	6.3	21.4
480	114	Filtronic♦	207½	-10	...	...
265	151	GB Group	154⅜	-5¾	2.8	-5.0
51	24	Ilika♦	25	-1	...	-6.2
138	56	Ingenta♦	65	-½	6.9	5.4
178	73	Intercede♦	111		...	19.5
28½	11⅛	Iomart♦	14½	+⅛	...	-1.8
72⅞	4⅝	IQE♦	44	-2¾	...	-11.7
4453½	912⅝	LG Electronics‡	1925¼	+78⅝	1.3	...
79	37	MTI Wireless♦	67	-1	3.0	15.4
12¼	2	Nanoco Group	2½		...	-2.3
138	94⅛	Netcall♦	115½		0.8	47.1
36	22	Northamber♦	25		2.4	-1.7
60⅜	37½	Oxford Metrics♦	38¾	-⅞	8.4	-70.5
31	17	Pennant Intl♦	29	-½	...	-5.8
447	210	Playtech	400	+⅝	...	1.0
50	23	Pulsar Group♦	24		...	-3.1
576½	398½	QinetiQ	483⅜	-9¾	2.3	24.0
117	88	RM	104½	+1½	...	40.2
6½	2⅜	Seeing Machines♦	4⅜	-⅛	...	-10.7
66	35½	Shearwater Group♦	58½		...	-1.5
2134	1083	Softcat	2032	-30	1.5	30.5
39½	5	Sorted Group#	9		...	-0.2
1018½	575½	Tele Ericsson	743	+1	3.1	11.3
1181	771⅝	**The Sage Grp**	1055	-16	2.1	28.0
89½	52½	Touchstar♦	75	-10	4.3	-5.6
435	280	Tracsis♦	355		0.8	...
430	236	Triad Group	400	-10	2.2	40.3
360	210	Water Intel♦	350	+5	...	16.5
150	96⅜	Xaar	118	+1½	...	-27.4
19	8½	Zoo Digital♦	16½		...	-5.9

Telecoms

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
436¼	212½	**Airtel Africa**	341⅝	-⅝	1.5	24.8
242⅛	173	**BT Group**‡	203⅞	-1¼	4.1	18.5
169½	106	Currys‡	152½	+¾	2.0	9.8
1207	687	Gamma Comms	1159	+3	1.9	16.7
247⅝	127⅝	Helios Towers‡	195¾	-2	0.9	71.5
0⅜	0⅛	Gana Media♦	0⅛		...	-3.1
1914	638	Telecom Plus	838	-14	6.0	8.3
131⅛	83⅜	**Vodafone**	119⅜		3.3	-84.3

Transport

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
260	203½	Braemar‡	230	+7½	3.0	31.8
5485	3365	Clarkson‡	5070	-15	2.2	23.7
683¾	332⅝	EasyJet	673¼	+4	2.0	10.2
225¾	152⅛	FirstGroup	174¾	-1⅞	4.1	8.2
554	325	Fisher (James)	440	+2	...	-50.6
492⅞	332¾	**Intl Cons Air**	419⅜	-3	1.6	6.9
699⅝	458	Irish Cont	632½	+7½	...	15.8
33½	17	Mobico Group	22⅞	-⅛	...	-1.0
7	1½	Sutton Harbour♦	2¼	+¼	...	-0.2
1453	832	Wizz Air	1069	+8	...	...

Utilities

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
220¼	148⅞	**Centrica**‡	149⅝	-2¾	3.8	-99.7
937½	626	Drax Group	783½	-16½	3.9	37.9
485	420	Jersey Electricity	440		5.0	12.3
1428½	1000	**National Grid**	1147½	-16½	4.2	17.5
606	439⅜	Pennon‡	460	-13	6.4	23.7
3335	2381	**Severn Trent**	2986	-76	4.2	24.2
2767½	1597	**SSE**‡	2359	-47	2.9	22.4
1497	1072	**United Utilities**	1362	-40	3.9	15.8

INVESTMENT COMPANIES

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
4497	1825	**3i Group**	2756	-46	3.1	5.1
399½	325	3i Infrastructure	386	-1½	3.5	12.1
1786	1408⅛	Aberforth Smlr	1754	+4	2.7	27.4
1394	1178	**Alliance Witan**‡	1359	-1	2.2	73.5
405	321	Artemis UK Future Lead	395	+½	3.9	31.9
200	116⅜	Athelney Trust	165		6.1	14.5
273	235⅛	AVI Global	263½	-½	1.7	52.0
194	154½	AVI Japan	172	+½	1.3	58.5
331	277	Baillie Gifford Ch Gr	302½	-3½	0.8	...
133	91⅜	Baillie Gifford Eur Gr	123½		0.6	...
1090	811⅛	Baillie Gifford Jpn	1050	-6	1.0	...
176	123	Baillie Gifford SN	168	-1⅝	0.4	...
231	180⅛	Baillie Gifford UK Gr‡	220	-2	2.8	35.3
154¾	121¾	Bankers Invstmt Tst	150	+¼	1.9	66.7
445	387¾	BH Macro GBP	423½		...	20.0
1786	883½	Biotech Growth	1692	-8	...	-890.5
289½	201	BlckRck Amer Inc‡	279	+1	5.3	98.6
205	123	BlckRck Eng&Res Inc	182½	-3½	3.2	52.1
208	164½	BlckRck Fro Inv	191	+1	4.0	25.4
625	507	BlackRock Grt Euro	593	-2	1.2	86.1
240	200	BlckRck Inc&Grth	231	-3	3.3	32.0
288⅜	230¾	BlckRck Smlr‡	267	-2½	3.0	30.5
1076	563	BlckRck Wld Min	1014		2.4	42.1
1665	1280	Brown Adv US Sm	1590	+17½	...	-265.4
1588	1336	Brunner‡	1556	+6	1.7	55.9
402	312	Caledonia Inv	391	-3	2.0	50.8
599	486	City of Lon IT	585	-3	3.8	27.1
155⅜	80	Crystal Amber Fd	82½		-59.8	...
592	439⅞	CT Priv Eq Ord	478	-2	5.9	...
373	320	CT UK Cap & Inc	355	-3½	3.8	29.3
120	92	CT UK HIT B	107	-2	5.6	22.1
126	97	CT UK HIT	120	+1	5.0	24.7
480¼	460	Dunedin Ent#	475		...	...
867	737⅝	Edinburgh IT	850	-4	3.8	32.0
294½	188¼	Edin Wwide	258	-2	...	-232.4
1332	325⅜	**F&C Inv Trust**	341⅝	+1	1.2	76.0
672	546	Fidlty Asian Val	624		3.3	27.7
339	241	Fidelity China Sp	255	-3	3.5	27.7
1574	845	FdityEmrgMkt	1478	-12	1.3	64.4
447½	367½	Fidelity European Trust	430	+½	2.3	38.1
479½	372	Fidlty Spec Val	467½	-2	2.2	38.1
894	706¼	Fins Gwth & Inc	811	-11	2.5	42.9
85⅝	69¾	GCP Infrastructure‡	82⅞	-¼	8.4	38.6
370	316	Global Opps Tst	336	-7½	3.1	43.1
110⅞	106	Golden Prospect	110		-16.4	...
69	57⅛	Greencoat Renew‡	67⅞		-16.8	...
117	92¼	Greencoat UK Wind	107¾	-¾	9.9	-12.4
346	250	Hansa Investment Co	340	+4	1.3	77.3
335	244	Hansa Inv Co A	331	-1	1.3	75.2
3500	2745	Hbrvest Glbl Pt Eq	3330	-50	...	-56.2
214	173¼	Hend High Inc	205	-1½	5.4	18.2
998	769	Hend Smlr	958	-11	3.0	36.7
3290¾	2285	Herald Inv Trust	2910	-5	...	...
512	318⅝	HgCapital Trust	403	-20	1.2	...
141	107¼	HICL Infra‡	133⅝	-1¼	6.4	9.7
1611⅜	1288¼	ICG Ent Tr	1476	+4	2.8	-415.8
494¾	379	Impax Env Mkts	438	-2	1.2	88.7
519	369	Invesco Asia Dragon Tr	498	-2	3.9	50.7
178½	150⅛	Invesco Bond Inc	171½		7.1	13.1
427	318	Invesco Glbl Eq Inc	409	+1	3.9	81.6
1258	1041	JPM American‡	1202	-2	1.0	...
652	398	JPM Asia Gro & Inc	582		5.3	...
313	260	JPM China	262½	-7½	5.2	67.5
986	791¾	JPM Claverhs	960	-6	3.8	28.5
310	181⅝	JPM Emrg EMEA Sec	239½		0.3	...
181¼	118⅜	JPM Em Mkts	166⅜	-¾	4.5	72.3
666	548	JPMorgan Euro	627	-4	2.6	34.5
221	148	JPM Em Mkts Div Inc	210		2.9	36.9
641	529⅝	JPM GG&I‡	611½	+1½	4.1	73.9
1098	799	JPM India	879		5.0	...
867	661	JPM Japan	798	-12	1.1	78.6
463	365	JPM Smllr Co	427	-1	0.7	...
1290	977⅜	Law Debenture	1234	-10	3.0	33.1
191½	145½	Lowland Inv	186	+½	3.6	27.6
140	137¾	Marwyn Val Inv	138½		15.3	...
290½	234¼	Mercantile IT	280	-3½	2.9	30.3
691	536	Merchants Trust	677	-4	4.4	22.1
804	682	Mid Wynd	784	-8	1.1	...
1664	1366	Monks Inv Trust‡	1616	+12	0.1	...
189	142	Montanaro Eur Sml	176	-1	0.9	90.7
1036	854⅝	Murray Income Trust‡	988	-6	4.1	25.6
376	293	Murray Intl	370	-½	3.5	26.6
437	345	Pacific Assets Trust‡	421	-2	...	75.2
409	325	Pantheon Intl	391	-½	...	...
5095	3636	**Pershing Sqr**‡	3840	+8	1.4	3.7
558	515	Personal Assets‡	549		1.0	91.0
743½	385⅞	**Polar CapTech**	633	-3	...	-753.6
80½	63¼	Renewables Infra‡	74	-¾	10.2	-13.7
2645	1932	RIT Cap Ptnr	2495	-5	1.8	...
990⅝	490	Riverstone	590		...	-367.2
738	498	Schroder TotRt	690	-9	1.7	70.3
892	608	Schrd Asia Pac	833	-5	1.6	63.1
380	311⅞	Schrod Inc Gwth	370	-2	4.0	29.5
401	276	Schrod Jap Gwth	383	-2	3.2	55.4
790	652	Schrod UKMid	776	+8	2.9	31.0
17¾	12¾	Schroder UK PP Tr	17⅛	-¼	...	-71.2
572	480⅛	Scot American‡	555	-1	2.9	35.5
1563	1015¾	**Scot Mortgage**	1465	-½	0.3	...
88	75½	Sequoia Eco	84⅛	+⅛	8.2	12.3
253	215⅞	STS Glbl Inc Grwth	228	-1	3.7	35.1
352	198⅝	Temp Emg Mkt	322½	-1½	1.6	59.8
429½	334	Temple Bar‡	417	-1½	3.7	30.2
198⅝	162¾	The Glbl Smaller‡	190⅜	-1	1.7	64.5
9	0⅜	Potentially AI	6¼		-1.6	...
364½	291	TR Property	297	-2	5.4	18.8
200⅜	200⅜	UIL	197		19.4	...
302	243	Utilico Emerging Mkt	274	-2	3.5	20.2
865	682	Vietnam Ent Inv	734	+2	...	4.8
401½	320	Ww Health	387	+1	0.6	...

♦AIM company; # Price at suspension; † Ex dividend; ‡ Ex scrip; ▲ Ex rights issue; ▼ Ex all; § Ex capital distribution; * figures or report awaited; . . . No significant data. Companies in bold are constituents of the FTSE 100 Index. Investment Cos sector Nav Dis or Prm supplied by ICE Data Services.

Exchange rates

Australia $	1.88334 (-0.00766)
Canada $	1.87042 (-0.00724)
Denmark Kr	8.70601 (-0.00623)
Euro	1.1644 (-0.0011)
Hong Kong $	10.586 (-0.009)
Hungary	428.3 (-0.99)
Indonesia	23880.86 (-60.37)
Israel	4.081 (-0.0062)
Japan Yen	214.439 (-1.958)
New Zealand $	2.30934 (+0.01667)
Norway Kr	12.574 (-0.0281)
Poland	5.04131 (+0.0088)
Russia	117.84 (+0.494)
S Africa	21.66886 (-0.17822)
Sweden Kr	12.9872 (-0.0011)
Switzerland Fr	1.09783 (+0.00162)
Turkey Lira	65.1965 (-0.0621)
USA $	1.3502 (-0.0012)

Gold/precious metals

(US dollars per ounce)

Bullion: Open $4330.348

Close $4374.53 **High** $4398.09

Low $4282.72

AM $4308.70 **PM** $4382.25

Platinum $1762.442

Silver $65.0737

Palladium $1348.656

Money rates %

Base Rates Clearing Banks: 3.75%
ECB Refi 2.40%
Fed Fund 3.5-3.75%
Halifax Mortgage Rate (SVR) 7.24%

Sterling spot and forward rates

Mkt Rates for	Range	Close	1 month	3 month
Copenhagen	8.7057	8.7127	-132.619	-389.982
Euro	1.1644	1.1655	-13.69	-39.9
Montreal	1.8704	1.8782	-25.92	-77.23
New York	1.3502	1.3514	0.39	1.125
Oslo	12.5740	12.6012	51.79	161.17
Tokyo	214.4220	216.3650	-51.81	-149.14
Zurich	1.0979	1.0962	-37.7	-111.6

Other sterling

Argentine peso	2041.46094-2041.46289
Australian dollar	1.88334-1.88356
Bahrain dinar	0.50820-0.51020
Brazilian real	6.88990-6.89190
Euro	1.16440-1.16520
Hong Kong dollar	10.58500-10.58900
Indian rupee	127.50690-127.58690
Indonesian rupiah	23880.85938-23920.85938
Kuwaiti dinar	0.41630-0.41830
Malaysian ringgit	5.45910-5.46110
New Zealand dollar	2.30936-2.30976
Singaporean dollar	1.71577-1.71612
South African rand	21.66714-21.67976
UAE dirham	4.95740-4.95940

Dollar rates

Australia	1.39430-1.39510
Canada	1.38533-1.38538
Denmark	6.44851-6.44860
Euro	0.86240-0.86280
Hong Kong	7.84184-7.84215
Japan	158.80901-158.82201
Malaysia	4.04300-4.04800
Norway	9.31390-9.31641
Singapore	1.27086-1.27099
Sweden	9.62140-9.62330
Switzerland	0.81319-0.81323

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46", 48", 50", 52"	~~£39~~	£32	£7

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Probation worker of a young Lee Harvey Oswald
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Register

Eddie Bell

Softly spoken publishing mogul who attracted a long list of high-profile writers and secured Margaret Thatcher's bestselling memoir

Margaret Thatcher sat on one side of the table, with Eddie Bell, the publishing mogul, on the other. It was an unlikely meeting. They were talking money, a lot of it. She was the shopkeeper's daughter who until recently had been the most formidable right-wing prime minister of modern times, while he was a man whose mother had been the first Labour councillor in Airdrie, one of the toughest working-class towns in western Scotland. The last deep mine there had been closed during the Iron Lady's time in Downing Street. Now they were discussing her memoirs. He pushed a contract with a very substantial figure on it across to her. "Is that it?" she asked.

"No," he replied. "If you are to earn the very substantial sum I'm about to pay you, you'll have to help with the promotion. A punishing schedule, speeches from breakfast to dinner across major cities in this country and across Europe. Signings, interviews. It will demand 110 per cent effort."

Ignoring his shaky arithmetic, the former prime minister picked up her pen and signed. It was the start of a highly successful relationship. *The Downing Street Years* sold more than 120,000 copies in its first week and became one of the bestselling political autobiographies of all time. Yet there were moments of tension.

Her historic book was surrounded by strictest security while it was being printed but, perhaps inevitably, a week before publication, an extract from it was leaked to a national newspaper. Bell was on his way to grovel and apologise when his phone rang. It was Rupert Murdoch, the owner of HarperCollins and his boss. "Get ready for your handbagging," he muttered.

When Bell arrived at her office, the Iron Lady was waiting for him and threw herself at him, not in fury but for what in Thatcher passed as a hug of consolation. "You must be feeling terrible," she said. They settled any upset over a glass of whisky.

Bell was one of the most influential and colourful figures in British book publishing during a period when a traditional and often family-run industry was forced to face up to the headwinds of global competition and consolidation. He took risks in a manner that those from a more secure background might never have dared. Thatcher was not the only great political figure to be captured by his quiet charm and substantial fee — he published the memoirs of John Major and flew to Moscow to sign up Mikhail Gorbachev's memoir on the collapse of the Soviet Union. He was committed to the idea that heavyweight books could still fly off the shelves and he proved his theory time and again.

He also recognised the appeal of powerful political novels, too, and when he moved from Hodder & Stoughton to HarperCollins, Jeffrey Archer followed him. Their partnership became folkloric. "Eddie was a breath of fresh air in a world filled with old-fashioned, old-school traditionalists," Archer said. "He was quite mad, with a touch of genius."

Bell pushed politics and parliament on to the bestsellers list. He also brought Michael Dobbs into the fold with his first novel, *House of Cards*, which became a worldwide TV hit for the BBC and Netflix. Bell was also instrumental in the success of Dobbs's later political novel, *The Lords' Day*, currently being filmed by Netflix.

SUZANNE HUBBARD/TIMES NEWSPAPERS LTD

Bell in 1999 and in 2000 at a launch with the entrepreneur Victoria Barnsley

Bell was not cut from the traditional pattern of publishers — he was a working-class boy who never went to university and whose father laid kerb stones for the local council. "In Airdrie, you were either good with your hands or you were fast on your feet," he said. He grew up to have some of the fastest

When Thatcher's book was leaked he was told to expect a handbagging

feet in the book world. He possessed an exceptional marketing mind, developed in his early days when he was a drinks salesman, required to sell prebottled ladies' cocktails with exotic names such as Amber Sin, Wicked Ladies and Baby Bubbly into the working men's pubs and clubs of Glasgow.

His marketing skills were impressive. Early in his publishing career he was struggling to persuade the American author Harold Robbins, one of the bestselling novelists of all time, to join his fold. Robbins was in the south of France and could not make their scheduled first meeting because a propeller had broken on his private plane. Bell sent him a new propeller.

Robbins was one of a long list of writers who were beguiled by Bell, along with Bernard Cornwell, Barbara Taylor Bradford, James Herbert, Jung Chang, Tom Clancy, Doris Lessing, Jack Higgins and a legion of others. "He had a talent for listening," one said, "which you didn't find in many publishers."

Bell was born in Airdrie, Scotland, in 1949, the youngest child of Edward and Jean Bell. He described his father, who worked as a labourer for the local council, as "a kind of Walter Mitty", day-dreaming his way through laying kerbstones in the town. His mother was a JP as well as a councillor, a passionate Christian Socialist who ran a hotel where her youngest son picked up many of his people-handling skills. It was not a comfortable childhood. His eldest brother Jim, 17 years his senior, said that "the room lit up when Eddie walked in — unlike our father, who turned out the lights".

He left school at 16 to work at Inver House Distillers, where he met June Bannatyne. He handled whisky blends, she typed up his reports and they married in 1969. She survives him, along with their two daughters, a son, and five grandchildren. Bell took naturally to sales, in part because the job gave him a car that he otherwise could not afford. But he soon turned to the world of commercial book publishing, where he was to become one of the leading figures of the past half-century.

It was not always a smooth ride. He started with Hodder & Stoughton as a salesman in central Scotland, and one of the first books he was given to handle was RF Delderfield's *God is an Englishman*, a daunting title to sell in that part of the world. Soon after he was given *How to Cheat at Cooking*, whose author was the relatively unknown Delia Smith. When she arrived at Edinburgh airport, she found the entire window of WH Smith filled with piles of her book, and to her delight found the same in every other bookshop she visited. What she did not know was that they literally were the same books, transported from window to window by her enthusiastic young sales rep.

He was salesman of the year in 1973 and 1974 and was soon moved to London as Hodder's sales and marketing director, turning Archer's novel *Kane and Abel* into a huge bestseller. James Clavell, Joan Collins, Jean M Auel, David Niven — all created a sales momentum for the publisher that helped to carry many other, newer authors to prominence. Then William Collins poached him to become managing director of his family publishing firm, Collins.

Bell was to spend the next 15 years at Collins. It was a rollercoaster ride, filled with bestsellers and controversy in a publishing world that was changing beyond recognition. In 1987 News Corporation bought Harper & Row in the US and two years after that Collins in the UK. Bell was given responsibility for leading the UK arm of the newly merged international operation, HarperCollins.

The company was consolidated, revitalised, slimmed down, made profitable and turned into a towering force in the publishing world. Not everyone enjoyed the process — Private Eye christened him Eddie McBastard — but authors generally loved him as he continued his run of bestsellers, with Thatcher, Major, Archer, Cornwell, Higgins and Sidney Sheldon. Even the sales of dead authors such as Tolkien and Agatha Christie were rekindled and soared. Bell became one of the commanding figures of the book world, acknowledged for his marketing skills and support for authors, offering endless encouragement in his quiet Scottish brogue, often surrounded by a cloud of Havana smoke.

One fallout came with the former Tory grandee and governor of Hong Kong, Chris Patten, whose 1998 book *East and West* turned from diplomatic memoir to drama after HarperCollins first acquired the rights, then refused to publish. A war of recrimination broke out — there was speculation that Murdoch did not want the book published as its criticism of the Chinese authorities threatened his commercial interests in Asia — his editor resigned, but whatever the reasons for the debacle, it was inevitable that Bell's reputation would take a hit. To the surprise of some, he was not sacked, but it seemed to squeeze some of the joy from his role, for two years later he resigned from HarperCollins, having overseen a period of extraordinary advance.

Instead of turning his back on the world of publishing, he joined the boards of several companies, including Haynes Publishing, renowned for its automotive repair manuals, bringing it into the digital age. He also set up his own literary agency, Bell Lomax Moreton, and was followed into the world of publishing by both his daughters.

Bell was a man of moderate height but immense presence, a passionate golfer, opera buff and a season ticket holder at Arsenal. He shared his love of whisky with Thatcher, although they differed in the best way to drink it — she with soda, like Winston Churchill; Bell preferred water. It did not stop them developing a sincere friendship.

His birthplace of Airdrie, he said, was "working class and tough as hell". Those down- to-earth origins never entirely left him. But when he joined the world of publishing, he described it as an enlightenment. "I became a great reader, and I loved writers."

Eddie Bell, publisher, was born on August 2, 1949. He died after a short illness on August 16, 2026, aged 77

Register

John Carro

American judge and probation worker of Lee Harvey Oswald who was called to give testimony after Kennedy's assassination

It took some time for John Carro to realise that the man who had murdered John F Kennedy was the same 13-year-old he had ministered to as a probation worker in 1953.

When news broke that Lee Harvey Oswald had assassinated the president on November 22, 1963, Carro was sitting in his office in New York as assistant to the mayor, Robert F Wagner Jr. It was a picture in the newspaper of Oswald's mother that triggered the memory. Carro was studying it, certain he knew her from somewhere, when "a friend called me up, a social worker, to tell me, 'Carro, you know who that case is?' And he said, 'That was the case you handled. Don't you remember?'" As they talked, "a kind of a numb feeling" came over Carro. He went upstairs to inform the mayor, who told him to "just sit tight and don't say anything".

Five months later, on April 17, 1964, Carro was called to testify before the Warren Commission on the Kennedy assassination and Oswald's murder two days later by the nightclub owner Jack Ruby. The case had fallen on his desk, Carro told the commission, in 1953. Oswald had skipped about 47 days of school, triggering a warrant for his mother, Marguerite, to bring him into court. An investigation was then ordered and Carro brought in to draw up a history of Oswald and his family.

During the commission, Carro was asked whether he could identify an intrinsic psychological disturbance that might have led the boy to commit a crime of this nature a decade later. Carro's answer, one that contradicted several other testimonies, was that he had seen boys far more troubled than Oswald, whose circumstances Carro believed played a far greater role in his development.

In Carro's estimation, Oswald was a lonely boy struggling to adjust to life in the Bronx after a move from Louisiana. His truancy wasn't daring, Carro argued, "not the usual hooky-playing type — the type of boy who does not go to school, to truant with his other friends, to go to the park, fish, play, or whatever it is. This is a boy who would not go to school just to remain home, not do anything."

Oswald would sit alone all day, Carro explained, reading magazines and watching TV. With his white complexion, ripped Levi's and southern accent, he stood out in his neighbourhood, and Carro believed that being mocked by classmates contributed to his social unease.

There was a measure of sympathy to Carro's testimony, partly because he, too, had grown up feeling out of place; he was a Puerto Rican boy who didn't speak a word of English and was relentlessly bullied. "I remember my mother bought me a pair of skates and I don't think I was downstairs for ten minutes with the skates before they took them away from me," he told the commission. "And I just stayed upstairs and waited for my mother at 5 o'clock."

"I can see this kind of reaction taking place," Carro reflected. "You meet the situations. Either you meet them head on or you retreat from them."

For the best part of a year Carro tried to find an institution that would give Oswald help, but they were either full up or wouldn't accept him because of religious differences at a time when agencies in New York were organised along lines of faith: Catholic, Jewish and Protestant. The other problem was that his mother was, in Carro's estimation, uncooperative, emotionally detached and self-absorbed. Carro recommended Oswald for psychiatric help — "to be brought out of this shell that he was retreating into" — but Marguerite refused to give consent, and eventually moved with her son to New Orleans in 1954.

Carro tried to write but the letter was returned with "Moved, address unknown". The next he heard of Oswald was the news that he had murdered Kennedy. The commission concluded that he had acted alone, noting Oswald's Marxist, anti-authoritarian views, but didn't offer any motive behind the assassination.

COURTESY OF THE CARRO FAMILY

Carro with the New York mayor John V Lindsay in 1969; Lee Harvey Oswald, right, as a boy and in a 1963 mugshot

After the case Carro left the job to work for the New York City Police Department, which pushed him towards undercover and narcotics work in Puerto Rican neighbourhoods. "All I wanted to do was work with the juvenile division," Carro recalled. "So I quit after a month and got a job with the Youth Board."

He received his law degree from Brooklyn Law School in 1956 and was assistant to Wagner between 1960 and 1965, the first Puerto Rican to hold such a senior position in the New York City government. Appointed to the New York City Criminal Court in 1969 and the state Supreme Court in 1977, he was the first Puerto Rican Appellate Division Justice in New York from 1979 to 1994.

Carro was put forward to become a federal court judge but after three years of delay by the governments of Ronald Reagan and George Bush Sr, he withdrew his nomination in 1991 — his son, John, told The New York Times that in a meeting with Edwin Meese, the US attorney-general, Carro had been told, "You're really not our kind of guy". Carro requested that the next nominee be someone of Puerto Rican descent and Sonia Sotomayor was nominated, becoming the first Puerto Rican judge on the federal bench and later the Supreme Court.

John Francisco Carro was born in Orocovis, Puerto Rico, in 1927. After his parents' divorce he moved to East Harlem in New York with his mother, who found work as a seamstress to support them, while he shined shoes.

Carro became interested in social justice after being beaten up for speaking Spanish at a Catholic day camp. After the attack he slept on the chapel stairs, where he was found by a priest who later convinced him to apply to Fordham University in New York. He served in the navy from 1945 to 1947 and worked, ironically, as a director of a minority outreach programme for Kennedy's campaign before becoming a youth care worker, police officer and probation officer.

He is survived by his wife, Terry, and their seven children, four of whom are lawyers. After retiring he returned to private practice and founded the firm Carro, Velez, Carro & Mitchell (today known as Carro, Carro & Mitchell).

Amid the hundreds of testimonies at the Warren Commission, Carro's stood out for its touch of empathy. He didn't believe he had witnessed a destructive streak in the boy, who told him that when he grew up he wanted to be in the service, like his brothers. For Carro, such an event might rather be seen as "a crying out of people to say that they exist and that they are human beings, and they commit that violent act, just to get their one day in the sun, the day when all the papers will focus on them, and say, 'I am me. I am alive'."

John Carro, judge and probation worker, was born on August 21, 1937. He died on July 26, 2026, aged 98

Moses Ali

Soldier who served in Idi Amin's dictatorship but later re-emerged as a key power broker and great survivor of Ugandan politics

Moses Ali was the great survivor of Ugandan politics whose considerable form straddled Idi Amin's dictatorship, the civil war that followed and the more stable political order that ultimately emerged.

Opportunist or peacebuilder, according to your view, Ali survived several assassination attempts and imprisonments through the upheavals that broiled the former British protectorate during the Seventies and Eighties to emerge as a key broker who brought the current president Yoweri Museveni to power in 1986.

As a young man he pondered a career as an academic or lawyer but decided that the best way of pursuing his ambitions in the newly independent Uganda was in the army. So it proved on January 25, 1971, when Milton Obote was deposed as president in a military coup that brought Amin to power. Ali rose to become minister of finance before Amin sacked him from the government in 1978 on a charge of gross corruption. His fate would no doubt have been more grisly had he not fled the country.

Falling back on his West Nile powerbase in the north of the country, near his home town of Adjumani near the border with Sudan, Ali re-emerged as a rebel leader of the Uganda National Rescue Front (UNRF) that fought a guerrilla war against Obote, who had returned as Uganda's president after contested elections in 1980. Good at backing winners, Ali integrated his forces with rebels operating in the centre of the country and known as the National Resistance Army (NRA) under the leadership of Museveni. After the NRA won the Battle of Kampala in January 1986, Museveni was sworn in as president. "I agreed with Moses Ali that the UNRF people pull out slowly," Museveni recalled. "And he pulled out slowly. They didn't fight us when we were entering Kampala. That's how our co-operation started."

With two rebel forces at large, a new civil war in Uganda could have ensued but Ali's decision to negotiate has been praised as a harbinger of long-term peace and stability in the country. In return for backing Museveni as president, Ali was promoted to the rank of major general and served in his government, first as youth, culture and sports minister.

His relationship with Museveni was uneasy. Four years after his political rehabilitation under Museveni's government, Ali was sent to prison for two years, accused of treason, terrorism and firearms offences. He was eventually cleared by the country's high court.

Release and rehabilitation was owed, as always, to his West Nile powerbase, where he was adoringly known as the "Lion of Adjumani". The equation was simple. They kept him in power and in turn were loyal to Museveni, and Ali ensured that government investment kept flowing into roads, electricity, bridges, hospitals, schools and support for war veterans in his home region.

Ali served twice as deputy prime minister

Competent and scholarly, Ali would fill many other briefs. From 1994 he was minister for tourism, wildlife and antiquities, then minister for trade and industry, internal affairs, disaster preparedness and refugees, before being appointed deputy prime minister. He stepped down from the cabinet only in May.

Moses Ali was born into a Muslim family in the village of Meliaderi in the Adjumani district in 1939 to Muhammad Ali and Veronica Porsche Ali. He was educated in Christian missionary schools and Old Kampala Secondary School and trained to be a teacher. However, with Uganda politically fragile after it gained independence in 1962, Ali joined the army. He entered officer cadet training in Israel in 1966, became a paratrooper instructor and trained at the Staff College, Camberley, in the UK.

He was not among the main perpetrators of the military coup in 1971, but was swiftly advanced by Amin who saw his value as a representative of the West Nile region. While the Ugandan economy collapsed after the expulsion of the country's Asian community in 1972 and widespread human rights abuses were committed and "opponents" of the regime disappeared, Ali was promoted to the rank of brigadier in 1974 and served as minister of provincial administration and later as minister of finance.

The latter role gave him the opportunity to support Muslim causes, but aroused the increasingly paranoid Amin's suspicions as Ali became hugely popular among the country's sizeable Muslim population. Increasingly fearful for his safety, he fled Uganda shortly before Amin's dictatorship collapsed as a result of defeat in Uganda's war against Tanzania. Ali founded the UNRF and began a bush war against Obote.

For the last 30 years of his life, as Uganda gained a measure of political stability, Ali twice served as deputy prime minister and four times as second deputy prime minister. He survived an assassination attempt in 2001. In 2006 he lost his parliamentary seat but in 2011 won back his Adjumani West seat, aged over 70, and retained it thereafter. In 2012 he was made a four-star general.

His final role in Uganda's government was as deputy leader of government business in parliament from 2021 to May 2026. Despite repeated rumours of ill health, he appeared to be invulnerable.

Ali had several wives and is thought to have more than 30 children. He retained his parliamentary seat in Uganda's general election this year, but lost his cabinet post. His son Siraj Musa Ali was, however, appointed minister of state for works to ensure that the family's West Nile powerbase remains intact.

Moses Ali, Ugandan politician, was born on April 5, 1939. He died on July 18, 2026, aged 87

Email: obituaries@thetimes.co.uk

Lives remembered

Dolly Parton

Beau Dare writes: I first met Dolly Parton (obituary, August 25) on the set of her TV show, *Dolly*, when I was working in Hollywood as an actor-screenwriter in 1988. It was late in the day when I noticed her sitting in a corner by herself taking a break.

I had wanted to meet her so I went over and introduced myself. She was sweet and gentle, but you could see she was a bit tired. I then remembered that I had made a finger ring out of a dollar bill, that I had with me in my pocket.

I quickly took it out and gave it to her. Dolly's face lit up into a beautiful smile, as she put the ring on her finger and then admired it as if it were a diamond.

I'll never forget the look on her face, as she stood up and playfully thanked me, then gave me a big hug. Dolly was not only a gifted singer-songwriter, but also a very loving individual. Hollywood could take a lesson.

Douglas Carnegie, editor of The One Show *(2007-2010), writes*: Dolly Parton was the first big star to appear on *The One Show* nearly 20 years ago. In those early days most guests were household names only in their own homes.

She was in Britain to promote her children's literacy campaign, arriving at the studio with a posse of heavies in shades and black suits.

I had the job of telling her we wanted to open on a tight shot of her face, slowly widening as she said: "I'm Dolly Parton and I'm on *The One Show* with my two beauties", the camera finally revealing she had presenters Adrian Chiles and Christine Bleakley's heads tucked under each arm. She looked right through me but said nothing.

The heavies bristled and moved forward to confront me. Dolly raised her washboard fingernails and stopped them. She had one question. "When I say 'my two beauties' d'you want me to perk 'em up a bit?", at which she looked down at her considerable cleavage.

That would nail it, I told her — and she made it work a treat. Dolly Parton put the show on the map, bless her.

Sallie Peacock writes: The death of Dolly Parton and her obituary in The Times reminded me that years ago, as head of English and manager of the school library in a small rural secondary school in Herefordshire, I applied to Dolly's Foundation. I was delighted to receive sufficient funds so that every child in year 7 could receive a new book of their choice. What an amazing woman she was.

John Irvin

Richard Bates writes: The recent obituary for TV director John Irvin (August 20) included a reference to Sir Alec Guinness leaving the set on the first day of filming for the BBC's production of John le Carré's *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* as he felt he was not right for the part. Curiously this was in 1979, four years after I had offered Sir Alec the lead role in London Weekend Television's planned production. He had accepted with alacrity so one has to wonder why he got cold feet so long after. LWT eventually abandoned production after scripting differences with le Carré who was clearly determined to present the character George Smiley as a newly energised James Bond. Senior management would have none of it and returned the broadcast rights to le Carré. I was very relieved not to have to deal with le Carré's vanity, but remain deeply disappointed to this day to have missed the opportunity to work with the country's greatest living actor of that time.

RW Johnson

Michael Deeny writes: RW Johnson (obituary, August 18) cleaned up Magdalen's finances during the demanding years he was senior bursar as well as a politics fellow, as he explained in his very entertaining Oxford memoirs *Look Back in Laughter*. One story he told me concerned the college's legendary wine cellar, laid down in a bygone era when Château Latour and the like were £1 odd a bottle. Fellows could buy wine for their private dinners for cost plus 10 per cent, an amazing bargain as claret prices rocketed. He discovered that a few younger dons were selling cases of the best wines in the 1980s at Sotheby's for more than £100 a bottle, a practice he swiftly terminated before it exhausted the college's finest vintages.

▶ If you would like to add a personal view or recollection to a published obituary, you can send your contribution by email to **tributes@thetimes.co.uk**

Court Circular

Buckingham Palace
2nd September, 2026
The King, Patron, this afternoon attended a Garden Party to mark the One Hundred and Twenty Fifth Anniversary of the Victoria League for Commonwealth Friendship, Victoria League House, 55 Leinster Square, London W2, and was received by His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London (Sir Kenneth Olisa) and the Chairman (Mr John Steel).

The King this afternoon received the Pakistan National Cricket Team at Clarence House.

The President of the French Republic and Mrs Macron visited The King and Queen and remained to Tea.

The King and Queen, with The President of the French Republic and Madame Macron, this evening viewed the Bayeux Tapestry Exhibition at the British Museum, Great Russell Street, London WCI, and were received by His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London (Sir Kenneth Olisa), the Chairman of the British Museum (the Rt Hon George Osborne) and the Museum's Director (Dr Nicholas Cullinan).

Their Majesties and Their Excellencies, accompanied by the Rt Hon Andrew Burnham MP (Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury) and Ms Marie-France Van Heel, and escorted by the Chairman and Director, were briefed by curators of the Exhibition, before walking the length of the Tapestry.

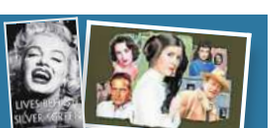
The King and Queen, with The President of the French Republic and Madame Macron, afterwards met representatives from the United Kingdom and France involved in the loan of the Bayeux Tapestry to the British Museum.

His Majesty and His Excellency addressed those present.

The Queen, Patron, Royal Academy of Dance, having been received by Mrs Colleen Harris (Deputy Lieutenant of Greater London), this afternoon visited the Royal Academy of Dance, 188 York Road, London SW11, and presented the Queen Elizabeth II Coronation Award.

The Baroness Dacres of Lewisham (Baroness in Waiting) was present at Royal Air Force Northolt this afternoon upon the Arrival of The President of the French Republic and welcomed His Excellency on behalf of The King.

The latest collection of Times obituaries



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Births, Marriages and Deaths

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TO EVERY thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven. Ecclesiastes 3.1 (AV)

Bible verses are provided by the Bible Society

Births

CALVER
On 26th August 2026 to Marita and Tom, a daughter, Maeve Alys.

Forthcoming Marriages

MR F. R. G. GIBSON AND MISS C. A. K. MURDOCH
The engagement is announced between Frederick, son of Mr and Mrs Mark Gibson of Stanford in the Vale, Oxfordshire, and Ciela, daughter of Dr David Kozlowski-Murdoch and Ms Cathy-Lynn Tylka of Windermere, Cumbria.

Anniversaries

FULTON : CAPELL
Congratulations to Tony and Julia celebrating their diamond wedding anniversary today! With love from Lucy, Rachel, Tim and families x

Deaths

HARKNESS James. The Very Reverend Dr James Harkness KCVO, CB, OBE. Peacefully on 20th August 2026, aged 90. Former Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and Chaplain General to the British Armed Forces. Beloved husband of Anne, much-loved father of Jane and Paul, and a cherished grandfather. A Thanksgiving Service to celebrate his life and ministry will be held on Wednesday 9th September at 2.30pm at Durisdeer Church.

MOULDING Jane Eve (née Rosenbloom) died peacefully on 12th August 2026 at her care home, Clarendon House, Buckingham. Darling wife of Rod for almost 59 years, beloved mother of James and Ruairi, cherished mother-in-law of Alison and Vikky, and loving grandmother of Lara, Katie, Genevieve and Iris. All inquiries to: Heritage & Sons, Buckingham. 01280 813188 heritage.buckingham@cpjfield.co.uk

PATRICK Carol Mary (née Mills) died peacefully on 25th August 2026 in Edinburgh, aged 68. Dearly loved wife of Dr Alan Patrick and devoted mother to Andrew and Katie. Greatly missed. A funeral service will be held at Mortonhall Crematorium Main Chapel, Edinburgh, on Thursday 10th September 2026 at 2pm, to which all are welcome. Bright clothing encouraged.

PIERCEY Michael David died suddenly on 29th August 2025, aged 89, at his home in Gower. Beloved husband of Josephine, father of Emma, William and Charlie. Renowned in the coal industry and remembered for his kindness, gentle nature and wonderful wit. A private family memorial was held, as he wished.

YESCOMBE
Edward Raymond Yescombe passed away on 16th August 2026, aged 78. Beloved husband of the late Frances Margaret Dundas Yescombe, much-loved father of Edward, Robert and Margaret. Edward will be deeply missed by his family and friends.

Edward "Ned" Yescombe was an independent consultant on project finance and PPPs and PFI. He was previously head of project finance in London for Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi, and its predecessor Bank of Tokyo. His work included advising on and arranging finance for projects in sectors such as power generation, economic and social infrastructure, telecommunications and natural resources, as well as in leasing, aircraft finance and real-estate finance. He was a law graduate of Oxford University.

Funeral service to be held at Islington Crematorium Chapel, 278 High Rd, London N2 9AG on 9th September at 10.15am.

Flowers may be sent to Co-Op Funeralcare Barnet.

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Legal Notices

CR-2026-005565
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE BUSINESS AND PROPERTY COURTS OF ENGLAND AND WALES COMPANIES COURT (ChD) IN THE MATTER OF TIME FINANCE PLC and IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2006

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, by an order dated 28 August 2026 made in the above matters, the Court has given permission for a meeting (the "Court Meeting") to be convened of the holders of Scheme Shares at the Voting Record Time (each as defined in the scheme of arrangement referred to below) for the purpose of considering and, if thought fit, approving (with or without modification) a scheme of arrangement (the "Scheme of Arrangement") proposed to be made pursuant to Part 26 of the Companies Act 2006 (the "Companies Act") between Time Finance plc (the "Company") and the holders of the Scheme Shares (as defined in the Scheme of Arrangement) and that the Court Meeting will be held at the offices of Simmons & Simmons LLP, CityPoint, 1 Ropemaker Street, London, EC2Y 9SS at 10.00 a.m. on 1 October 2026 at which place and time all holders of Scheme Shares are able to attend in person or by proxy. Any Scheme Shareholder (as defined in the Scheme of Arrangement) wishing to vote at the Court Meeting is entitled to appoint a proxy by following the instructions set out in the document of which the Scheme of Arrangement forms part, dated 2 September 2026 and addressed to the shareholders of the Company (the "Scheme Document"). Holders of Scheme Shares entitled to attend and vote at the Court Meeting may attend such meeting in person or they may appoint another person or persons, whether a member of the Company or not, as their proxy or proxies, to exercise all or any of their rights to attend and vote at the Court Meeting, provided that, where more than one proxy is appointed, each proxy is appointed to exercise the rights attached to a different share or shares. Any Scheme Shareholder who has not received a blue Form of Proxy should request one from the Company's Registrars, Neville Registrars Limited by calling +44 (0) 121 585 1131 between 9.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. (London time) Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays in England and Wales) or by submitting a request in writing to Neville Registrars Limited, Neville House, Steelpark Road, Halesowen, B62 8HD. A copy of the Scheme Document, containing, among other things, the Scheme of Arrangement and the explanatory statement required to be published pursuant to section 897 of the Companies Act, is available from the Company's website at https://investors.timefinance.com/. A Scheme Shareholder who wishes to receive a hard copy of the Scheme Document may request one from the Company's registrars, Neville Registrars Limited, by calling the shareholder helpline between 9.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. (London time) Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays in England and Wales) on +44 (0) 121 585 1131, or by submitting a request in writing to Neville Registrars Limited, Neville House, Steelpark Road, Halesowen, B62 8HD, with an address to which the hard copy may be sent.

Dated 2 September 2026
Simmons & Simmons LLP
CityPoint, 1 Ropemaker Street
London, EC2Y 9SS
Solicitors for the Company

School Notices

BRIGHTON COLLEGE

Term begins today at Brighton College. Open Mornings take place on Saturday, Sept 26 and Saturday, Oct 10 for the College and Saturday, Oct 3 for Brighton College Prep School. The official opening of Brighton College Prep Hove will take place on Thursday, Sept 10. The Scottish and North East Universities Old Brightonian dinner will be held in Edinburgh on Friday, Nov 6. The London Universities Old Brightonian dinner will take place on Friday, Nov 13. The College production of Much Ado About Nothing takes place on Thursday, Nov 19, Friday, Nov 20 and Saturday, Nov 21. The Bangkok Community drinks will take place on Friday, Dec 4. The Carol Services will be held in the College Chapel on Friday, Dec 4 and Sunday, Dec 6. Term ends on Wednesday, Dec 9. The Hong Kong Community dinner will take place on Friday, Dec 11 and the Singapore Community drinks will be held on Sunday, Dec 13. The Australian Old Brightonian Dinner will take place in Sydney on Thursday, Dec 17.

Law

‘Insulting’ fee increase plans irk barristers

Bar chiefs criticise government proposals that may prompt early guilty pleas, writes **Jonathan Ames**

JONATHAN BRADY/PA

Sarah Sackman KC, the courts minister, proposed an increase in legal aid rates for barristers involved in criminal cases

Criminal justice is set to be an early flashpoint for Andy Burnham’s government. Not only does the still new prime minister have to do battle over Labour’s controversial prisoner early release scheme, the government faces claims that it is under the “insulting” and “erroneous perception” that a 30 per cent boost to fees paid to lawyers representing legally aided defendants will encourage early guilty pleas.

That criticism from Bar chiefs was levelled at a consultation paper in which Sarah Sackman KC, the courts minister, proposed a 30 per cent increase in legal aid rates for barristers involved in cases where defendants plead guilty at an early opportunity. No increase was planned for barristers appearing in trials that last more than a day.

Sackman argued that the measures were “designed to make sure that fees for work carried out at key stages of a case, such as early preparation, reflect the complexity and skill required. The proposals aim to support the efficient progression of cases.”

Justice ministers have been struggling to find levers that will reduce what has become an intractable backlog of cases in the crown courts, which hovers around 80,000. And Sackman will be smarting over Burnham’s apparent decision to scrap plans made under Keir Starmer’s government to significantly curb the number of cases going before juries by creating a so-called bench division of the crown court, which would involve a single judge determining guilt.

Sackman and the former justice secretary David Lammy had been the cheerleaders for that controversial proposal, which they argued only a matter of months ago was absolutely required to reduce the case backlog. Increasing the number of early guilty pleas is now seemingly viewed as a way of progressing more cases quickly through the system.

Yet in response to the government’s planned fee rise for barristers who are involved in early guilty pleas the Criminal Bar Association said it was “concerned that this proposal may demonstrate an erroneous perception that by increasing the fee on a guilty plea this may somehow encourage early guilty pleas”. The association added in its response to ministers that the suggestion “is not only insulting to the criminal Bar but an encouragement to breach our professional code of conduct”.

‘It’s an encouragement to breach our professional code of conduct’

Bar chiefs argued that in most criminal cases the bulk of the evidence has not been passed to the defence in time for a pre-trial hearing where an early guilty plea could be entered. The association added that “the degree to which ‘substantial preparatory work’ has been undertaken by that stage is extremely variable”.

It said the “real effect” of the government’s move would be that solicitors’ firms would have an incentive to retain cases until pre-trial hearings “in the hope of a guilty plea”, meaning that specialist “trial counsel, or those with specific expertise” wouldn’t be instructed “until much later in the proceedings, which will have an inevitable impact on the quality of preparation for trial”.

More broadly, the association argued that criminal barristers would be “disadvantaged by what is a further real-terms cut in remuneration generally, and particularly in respect of the failure to uprate daily attendance fees”.

Meanwhile, the Bar Council, which represents 18,000 practising barristers in England and Wales, added that the government’s plans would “disproportionately negatively impact rape and serious sexual offences cases” because defendants in such cases are historically much less likely to plead guilty.

“Generally, barristers act in the most serious, complex and lengthy trials,” Kirsty Brimelow KC, the council’s chair, said. She added that there was already “an issue of insufficient barristers due to the working conditions of practising in criminal law”, noting that the number of King’s Counsel dropping out of the specialism was particularly acute.

“This proposal will not attract them back, and may drive more away, which means more adjourned cases for complainant victims,” Brimelow said.

Instead the council has called on the government to increase fees for guilty pleas by 6 per cent and to match that percentage rise for daily attendance fees (the proposals included a 6 per cent general increase to the fees paid to criminal legal aid advocates, excluding daily attendance fees). The council argued that its model was recommended by the Criminal Legal Aid Advisory Board at the beginning of the year.

Bar leaders also raised the inflammatory suggestion that the government’s proposals on pay for early guilty pleas would be unfair on women lawyers. In its response the Criminal Bar Association said: “Put bluntly, many practitioners in RASSO [rape and serious sexual offence cases] — which includes a high proportion of women barristers — will see a failure to apply any increase to refreshers [pay for trials lasting multiple days] as an insult to their hard work. It will either promote an exodus to easier ‘volume’ work or exacerbate the gender differential in fee income, or both.”

The Bar Council has called on the government to create a fees review body for legal aid defence rates, which Brimelow said would ensure more generally that pay kept pace with inflation. She said the establishment of such a body would “demonstrate government commitment to tackling the criminal justice system’s downward spiral”.

Who’d want to take on a publisher after Harry’s defeat?

Colin Campbell
Comment

The appetite of celebrities for taking on the press is likely to have been curbed by a £34.5 million dose of judicially administered Ozempic.

That is the sum Associated Newspapers claims to have spent defeating Prince Harry and his six co-claimants in a privacy action brought against the Daily Mail and the Mail on Sunday — and the Duke of Sussex et al find themselves exposed well beyond their costs insurance cover.

Even prior to the dramatic High Court ruling, those hungry for their day in court have had hurdles to clear in getting cases to trial. A publisher can, in effect, buy its way out before the real fight has begun — so-called Part 36 offers can put so much money on the table, continuing to trial becomes a risk that even the very wealthy are unwilling to take.

Under that provision of the Civil Procedure Rules claimants can be left facing the possibility of paying significant amounts in costs even if they win but fail to recover even a penny more than the settlement offer. Claimants may want their day in court but Part 36 gives media organisations the means to make an offer even the super-wealthy can’t refuse.

A newspaper prepared to take its chances at trial presents a different problem. In Harry’s claim Mr Justice Nicklin ordered the claimants to pay the publisher’s costs on an indemnity basis. Nicklin made no finding of dishonesty. Rather, his criticism went to the way the case had been conducted. Immensely serious allegations had been advanced based on circumstantial evidence and were pursued when they should have been reassessed. Even the most upright celebrity cannot assume that indemnity costs are reserved for liars or those who have otherwise acted in bad faith.

Colin Campbell is a consultant at Kain Knight and a former costs judge

The sting of an indemnity order is that the approved costs budget that limits the amount recoverable no longer applies. Associated Newspapers can seek recovery of the costs it says it actually incurred — and the £34.5 million is more than twice its approved budget and about double the claimants’ reported £16.2 million insurance cover. After this case the safety nets of costs budgeting and insurance begin to look rather less secure.

Insurers are no doubt reeling. Will they really be prepared to provide the same level of cover next time? They may instead limit it to standard-basis costs, demand substantially higher premiums or decide that the more speculative cases are not worth insuring. Any one of those outcomes would choke off claims before they are issued.

And claimant lawyers may become much choosier about the cases they take on. Many effectively stake years of unpaid work on the eventual success of a claim. This judgment may make the next ambitious case built heavily on inference look a less attractive bet — particularly when, if it all goes badly wrong, there is the possibility of a wasted costs order being made against them personally.

There will continue to be genuine — and necessary — privacy cases against the media. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998 — which protects the right to private life — has not suddenly become a dead letter. But the days when wealthy individuals, lawyers and insurers are prepared to embark on vast, expensive and ambitious actions may well be numbered.

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THE TIMES
THE BRIEF

Historical case of the month
A mistaken identity and a biased judge led to birth of appeal court
thetimes.com

Legal firms go back to nature

Dan Hayes

Three insurance-specialist law firms are supporting Boothby Wildland, an ambitious nature restoration project on the site of a 1,525-acre former arable farm near Grantham in Lincolnshire.

DWF, Clyde & Co and Keoghs have joined four other insurance businesses in an initiative led by QBE, a multinational insurance company based in Australia. Each law firm will provide £50,000 to fund habitat creation, rewilding and associated carbon capture on a 17-acre segment of the property over the next 50 years.

Half a century is a long time in any law firm marketing plan, indicating that while many legal profession initiatives have suffered from the so-called greenwashing tag, this should not be one of them.

Nattergal, the private nature restoration company that has owned Boothby since 2021, says the QBE Buyers Club's "upfront capital investment" will be especially useful in the project's early stages, where many of the costs of restoring a landscape are concentrated.

"What makes [this] model distinctive is that eight businesses have pooled a single, upfront commitment into a defined area of land rather than purchasing credits separately on the open market," Claire Traynor, Nattergal's chief commercial officer, says. "This means that members can visit the site, monitor its recovery and report on it over time.

"For Boothby it provides funding that is tied to a place and a timescale rather than to a transaction, which provides the certainty that allows restoration to be planned around what the landscape requires rather than around what a funding cycle will accommodate."

Paddy Linehan, Clyde & Co's chief sustainability officer, underlines the collective aspect of the initiative. "Sustainability in professional services is often framed as an individual commitment, what each firm does within its own walls. The QBE Buyers Club is a different proposition. It asks what becomes possible when businesses invest together, across the relationships that already connect them."

BEN BIRCHALL/PA

Beavers were introduced as part of the Boothby Wildland nature restoration

Connie Cobb, a director at Keoghs, adds that "reaching net zero is an industry challenge, not an individual one. By working alongside our peers and aligning around shared goals we can multiply our impact and accelerate meaningful progress. Through collective action we are supporting the industrywide transition to a lower-carbon future."

Boothby was intensively farmed for decades. Under Nattergal's ownership the land dedicated to agricultural production has been gradually reduced to one field. Activities are instead focused on creating a combination of grassland, wetland, woodland and scrub, where native wildlife is already flourishing and natural flood management helps to protect local communities.

"The past 12 months have provided a useful test," Traynor says. "And, more recently, the extreme heat, wildfires and drought [affecting the UK] have highlighted the importance of nature to protect us from the effects of climate change. Land that has been drained and intensively farmed for decades sheds water very quickly during winter rainfall and retains very little in reserve by late summer. Reversing that is a central part of what restoration involves."

An early highlight of Boothby Wildland has been revitalising a 1.3-mile stretch of the West Glen River. This has reconnected it to its natural floodplain, created 20 ponds and boosted water storage. Nattergal released a family of beavers into the river system this year to help to create more wetlands.

"Habitat diversity provides a form of insurance," Traynor says. "Wetland, grassland, scrub and woodland respond to weather extremes in different ways, so a difficult year for one habitat does not become a difficult year for the whole site. For the businesses funding this work, these are not abstract considerations — extreme weather reaches them as claims, disruption and cost. This industry understands that risk better than most, which is part of the reason this consortium came together."

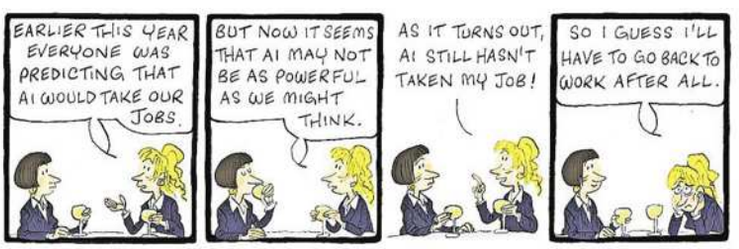
It's the long-term aspect of the group's commitment that will deliver these goals, Traynor says. "Nature recovery operates over decades rather than over funding cycles, and there are outcomes at Boothby that cannot be assessed for another 20 or 30 years. A 50-year commitment allows us to design restoration around what the landscape requires, rather than around what a short funding window will accommodate. Investments like this enable projects to be truly viable, thereby maximising their potential for success."

The hope is that other commercial organisations will take inspiration from the QBE-led scheme, says Abi Duff-Walker, the head of sustainability at DWF. "We hope the partnership inspires our peers and other businesses to take action and amplify impact for the benefit of people and the planet."

The rewilding approach is already taking effect at the Lincolnshire site. "Biodiversity has more than doubled since 2023, an increase of 108 per cent, and species richness has risen by nearly a third, with 152 varieties of birds, bats, bees, butterflies and plants now recorded on the site," Traynor says. "Grassland birds that continue to decline nationally have done well here, including the grey partridge, which is on the UK red list [at high risk of extinction]."

King's Counsel Alex Steuart

For a Few Guineas More: The Legal Year in Cartoons, Law Brief Publishing, £9.99



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Flaws in reform
Companies could face issues assessing their compliance obligations under corporate criminal liability measures
thetimes.com

Lawyer of the week Winston Jacob

Winston Jacob, a barrister at Lamb Chambers, represented in a Supreme Court hearing the successful appellant Cresta Court E, a "right to manage" company incorporated by the leasehold owners of a block of 20 flats in Hanger Lane, London. The judges ruled that Cresta could acquire the right to manage despite its failure to serve a notice inviting the participation of a tenant, stating the landlord Avon Freeholds could not take advantage of a procedural error that caused no prejudice.

What were the biggest hurdles you had to overcome in this case? Persuading the Supreme Court that it had been wrong in a 2024 ruling in a case called *AI Properties* to state that the clear consequence of a right to manage company's failure to give a participation notice to a tenant was that it could not serve a valid claim notice.

What is the best decision you have taken as a lawyer? Taking on my first right to manage case through the Bar Pro Bono Unit [now called Advocate], which set me on a path to interesting and important cases involving the right to manage legislation.

Whom do you most admire in the law? My wife, Tina Kumar-Jacob, my fellow barrister, who gives great career advice and juggles life at the Bar with dealing with me and our two young children.

What is the best advice you have received? In oral advocacy, do not simply follow your skeleton argument. Say things afresh and engage fully with the judge's questions, even if you have to abandon your original plan.

What is the funniest thing that has happened in your job? On my first appearance in the Court of Appeal I forgot to silence my new mobile phone, which started ringing during my opponent's submissions. After I had turned it off and apologised it started ringing again.

What are the best and worst elements of being a lawyer? The best is winning a borderline case for a deserving client. The worst is receiving urgent instructions on a Friday afternoon for a Monday deadline.

What law would you enact? A minimum walking speed for pedestrians on pavements. I cannot stand getting stuck behind an ambler.

What is your favourite film? *Gladiator*. Great.

Catherine Baksi
catherine.baksi@thetimes.co.uk

OUT OF COURT

The cases, the chatter, the chaos: what's really going on in the law

AI accuracy is big concern

So pervasive has artificial intelligence become that there is almost no lawyer in the land who is not invoking robotic assistance. In a survey of more than 500 "legal professionals" in the UK published this week, the legal profession data company LexisNexis found that 94 per cent of lawyers used AI for work, with nearly 75 per cent turning to robots at least once a week.

Accuracy remains the biggest concern, the researchers said, with 83 per cent of respondents worrying about wrong or fabricated information, while only 53 per cent were bothered about confidential data leaks.

Neurodiverse claims rise

Disability discrimination claims in England and Wales have rocketed by nearly 80 per cent to more than 4,000 over the past year, figures show, with experts citing rising "neurodiversity" as the cause.

Lisa Coleman, a lawyer at the firm Littler, argued that "greater public discussion of conditions such as ADHD and autism, together with online screening tools and information shared on social media, means more people are recognising traits that they may previously have overlooked and more people having confidence to disclose this at work".

The figures emerged amid mounting controversy around ADHD diagnoses. A fortnight ago Channel 4 aired a documentary, *The Great ADHD Myth?*, in which psychiatric experts suggested that the condition was not a neurodevelopmental disorder.

Funding for pupillages

In a bid to boost criminal law specialist barristers and attract applicants from more diverse backgrounds, the government has announced funding for up to 100 pupillages a year. The Ministry of Justice has pledged £1.5 million annually to match funding offered by chambers for the mandatory vocational training.

The government will fund the first six months of the required 12-month pupillage with £12,400 for 2027-28 London pupillages and £11,350 for 2027-28 those based outside the capital — lower than the minimum pupillage award set by the Bar's regulator, which from the beginning of this year were £25,863 for 12-month pupillages in London and £23,504 for elsewhere.

Ministry officials explain that the funding level was set by the Council of the Inns of Court and it is up to individual chambers to ensure the funding meets the minimum level set by the regulator.

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Wed 28 **Tangier, Morocco**

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Sun 2 **Arrive in Southampton**

Dates not mentioned will be spent relaxing at sea

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Today Outbreaks of rain and showers in the north. Largely dry in the south. Max 25C (77F), min 8C (46F)

Around Britain

Key: b=bright, c=cloud, d=drizzle, pc=partly cloudy du=dull, f=fair, fg=fog, h=hail, m=mist, r=rain, sh=showers, sl=sleet, sn=snow, s=sun, t=thunder *=previous day **=data not available

	Temp C midday yesterday		Rain mm 24 hrs to 5pm yesterday	Sun hr*
Aberdeen	14	C	0.0	5.7
Aberporth	19	D	2.8	3.8
Anglesey	18	D	1.0	4.4
Aviemore	12	R	0.2	5.6
Barnstaple	19	R	0.4	**
Bedford	17	D	1.0	**
Belfast	18	D	14.4	0.0
Birmingham	18	D	1.4	**
Bournemouth	20	C	1.2	7.7
Bridlington	20	C	0.2	**
Bristol	18	R	2.6	4.9
Camborne	19	R	2.6	4.4
Cardiff	20	C	4.8	5.8
Edinburgh	14	R	5.8	1.2
Eskdalemuir	14	R	12.2	0.0
Glasgow	14	C	9.4	0.0
Hereford	17	R	1.2	**
Herstmonceux	20	C	0.0	6.7
Ipswich	20	C	0.0	8.6
Isle of Man	15	R	16.4	1.2
Isle of Wight	20	C	0.0	**
Jersey	22	PC	0.0	9.7
Keswick	17	C	4.0	**
Kinloss	**	**	**	**
Leeds	15	R	1.8	**
Lerwick	10	R	1.6	2.4
Leuchars	13	C	0.2	3.1
Lincoln	18	R	0.2	7.0
Liverpool	17	R	0.6	**
London	19	R	0.4	6.4
Lyneham	17	C	3.0	5.7
Manchester	16	R	1.6	5.6
Margate	19	R	0.0	9.0
Milford Haven	18	C	4.8	**
Newcastle	17	R	1.0	**
Nottingham	18	C	3.6	7.7
Orkney	12	C	0.2	**
Oxford	17	R	4.2	**
Plymouth	18	D	2.6	**
Portland	18	C	0.4	**
Scilly, St Mary's	20	C	1.2	**
Shoreham	19	**	0.2	6.9
Shrewsbury	16	R	3.8	5.8
Snowdonia	16	R	7.4	**
Southend	19	R	0.0	9.2
South Uist	14	C	0.0	**
Stornoway	13	S	0.0	4.2
Tiree	15	C	0.0	8.1
Whitehaven	14	R	3.8	1.3
Wick	**	PC	0.6	**
Yeovilton	18	D	1.0	4.7

The world

All readings local midday yesterday

Alicante	31	S	Madeira	27	PC
Amsterdam	21	PC	Madrid	32	S
Athens	33	S	Malaga	28	PC
Auckland	17	PC	Mallorca	32	S
Bahrain	38	S	Malta	32	PC
Bangkok	32	PC	Melbourne	15	DU
Barbados	30	PC	Mexico City	23	C
Barcelona	30	S	Miami	31	B
Beijing	29	S	Milan	28	PC
Beirut	**	**	Mombasa	28	B
Belgrade	30	S	Montreal	24	PC
Berlin	22	PC	Moscow	20	B
Bermuda	29	SH	Mumbai	30	D
Bordeaux	27	S	Munich	24	S
Brussels	21	PC	Nairobi	24	B
Bucharest	29	S	Naples	31	PC
Budapest	26	S	New Orleans	32	PC
Buenos Aires	19	PC	New York	24	M
Cairo	33	PC	Nice	28	PC
Calcutta	31	**	Nicosia	33	S
Canberra	18	C	Oslo	18	S
Cape Town	19	S	Paris	23	B
Chicago	34	B	Perth	18	B
Copenhagen	21	B	Prague	22	S
Corfu	33	PC	Reykjavik	12	B
Delhi	28	R	Riga	19	B
Dubai	42	S	Rio de Janeiro	27	B
Dublin	21	B	Riyadh	41	S
Faro	27	S	Rome	31	S
Florence	31	S	San Francisco	21	B
Frankfurt	24	PC	Santiago	19	B
Geneva	26	S	São Paulo	20	PC
Gibraltar	26	PC	Seoul	27	B
Helsinki	17	PC	Seychelles	29	PC
Hong Kong	29	PC	Singapore	32	B
Honolulu	**	**	St Petersburg	16	C
Istanbul	30	S	Stockholm	17	B
Jerusalem	32	PC	Sydney	28	S
Johannesburg	25	S	Tel Aviv	32	PC
Kuala Lumpur	34	PC	Tenerife	30	PC
Kyiv	**	**	Tokyo	29	PC
Lanzarote	29	PC	Vancouver	20	B
Las Palmas	28	PC	Venice	29	S
Lima	22	C	Vienna	27	PC
Lisbon	29	S	Warsaw	21	PC
Los Angeles	24	PC	Washington	34	B
Luxor	37	S	Zurich	24	S

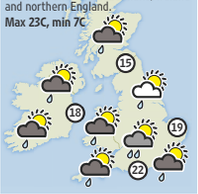
Five days ahead

Largely dry in England and Wales over the weekend. Unsettled and breezy otherwise

Tomorrow

Outbreaks of rain will spread southeastwards across southern England and Wales. Sunny spells and scattered showers in Scotland, Ireland and northern England.

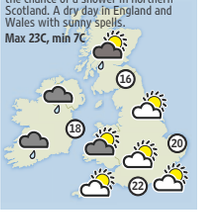
Max 23C, min 7C



Saturday

Spells of rain will spread northwards across Ireland. Sunny periods with the chance of a shower in northern Scotland. A dry day in England and Wales with sunny spells.

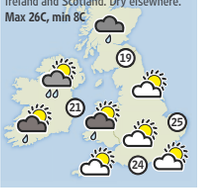
Max 23C, min 7C



Sunday

Spells of rain in northern and western Scotland and western Ireland. Sunny periods and scattered showers in western Wales and other areas of Ireland and Scotland. Dry elsewhere.

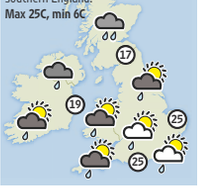
Max 26C, min 8C



Monday

Rain will spread southeastwards across Ireland, Scotland, northern England and Wales. Sunny periods with the chance of a shower in southern England.

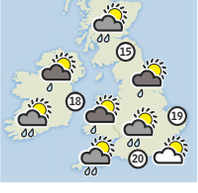
Max 25C, min 6C



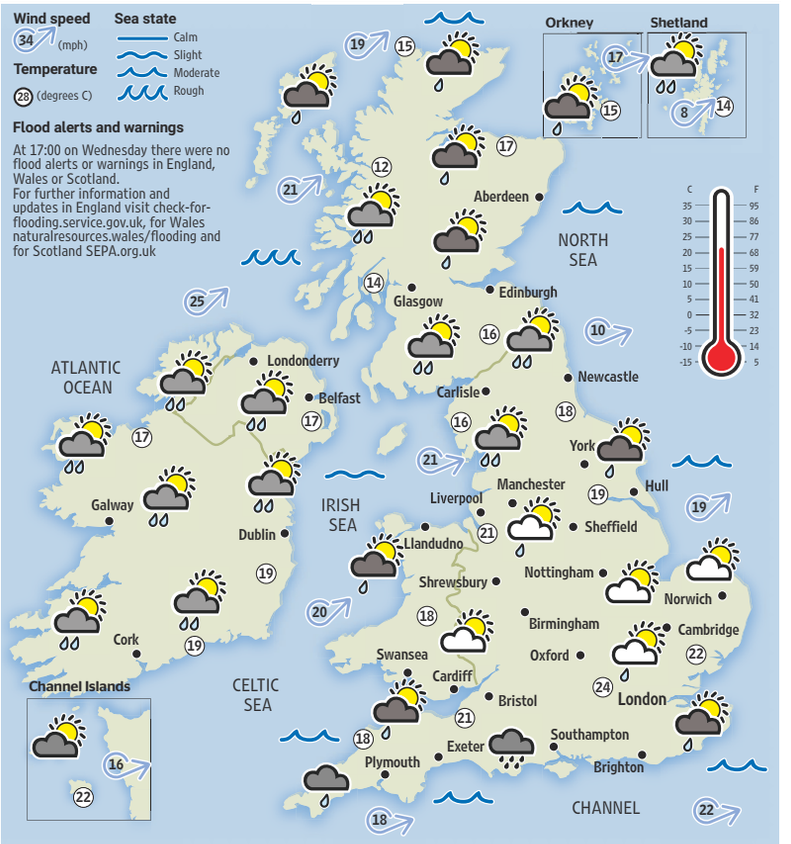
Tuesday

An unsettled day across the British Isles with blustery winds and outbreaks of rain or showers.

Max 20C, min 5C



The Times weather page is provided by WeatherQuest



General situation: Rain will push eastwards across Ireland, northern England and southern Scotland. Scattered heavy showers in northern Scotland. Largely dry elsewhere.
Lake District, IoM, NE Eng, Borders, Edinburgh and Dundee, SW Scotland, Glasgow: A dry morning with sunny periods. Cloud will build through the afternoon with spells of rain spreading in from the west. Moderate southwesterly winds. Maximum 19C (66F), minimum 10C (50F).

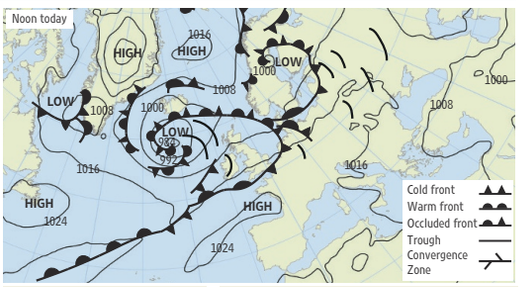
SE Eng, Cen S Eng, SW Eng, Channel Is: Largely cloudy along the south coast with the chance of some patchy light rain at times. Elsewhere, largely dry with sunny periods. Gentle to fresh southwesterly winds. Maximum 25C (77F), minimum 17C (63F).
Argyll, NW Scotland, Cen Highland, Moray Firth, NE Scotland, N Isles, Aberdeen: Sunny spells and scattered heavy showers. Moderate to strong southwesterly winds. Maximum 19C (66F), minimum 8C (46F).

N Ireland, Republic of Ireland: Sunny periods to start the day but through the morning cloud and rain will spread in from the west. A cloudy afternoon with spells of rain. Moderate southwesterly winds. Maximum 21C (70F), minimum 11C (52F).
London, E Anglia, Midlands, Wales, E Eng, Cen N Eng, NW Eng: Largely dry with sunny periods and a small chance of a light shower. Moderate west or southwesterly winds. Maximum 25C (77F), minimum 12C (54F).

Tides

Tidal predictions.
Heights in metres. All times in local time

Today		Ht		Ht
Aberdeen	05:46	4.1	18:22	3.8
Avonmouth	11:44	11.8	--:--	--
Belfast	03:23	3.5	15:56	3.2
Cardiff	11:24	11.1	23:48	10.7
Devonport	10:18	4.9	22:35	4.8
Dover	03:11	6.3	15:36	6.4
Dublin	03:56	3.9	16:29	3.7
Falmouth	09:27	4.7	21:51	4.6
Greenock	04:46	3.5	17:04	3.3
Harwich	04:12	3.7	16:15	3.9
Holyhead	02:37	5.3	15:02	5.0
Hull	10:54	7.1	23:15	6.5
Leith	07:07	5.3	19:41	4.9
Liverpool	03:21	8.9	15:44	8.4
London Bridge	06:16	6.4	18:33	6.7
Lowestoft	01:55	2.3	14:04	2.6
Milford Haven	10:42	6.3	23:09	6.2
Morecambe	03:32	8.9	15:56	8.4
Newhaven	03:20	6.2	15:42	6.2
Newquay	09:36	6.2	22:04	6.0
Oban	09:57	3.4	22:34	3.3
Penzance	09:07	5.0	21:32	4.9
Portsmouth	03:43	4.4	16:18	4.4
Shoreham	03:25	5.8	15:49	5.8
Southampton	02:58	4.3	15:23	4.3
Swansea	10:43	8.5	23:09	8.2
Tees	08:05	5.3	20:45	4.9
Weymouth	11:00	1.7	23:24	1.6



Synoptic situation

Largely cloudy along the south coast of England with some patchy light rain at times. A series of troughs will bring scattered heavy showers to northern Scotland. A developing frontal system will push outbreaks of rain eastwards across the north and west of Ireland, southern Scotland and northern England. Largely dry in other areas of the British Isles.

Highs and lows

24hrs to 5pm yesterday

Warmest: Jersey, 23.4C
Coldest: Braemar, 2.5C
Wettest: Logan Botanic Gardens, 19.2mm
Sunniest: Tibenham Airfield, Norfolk, 10.1hrs*

Sun and moon

For Greenwich
Sun rises: 06.16
Sun sets: 19.42
Moon rises: 21.44
Moon sets: 15.45 Fri
Third quarter: September 4

Hours of darkness

Aberdeen	20:30-05:46
Belfast	20:41-06:06
Birmingham	20:21-05:53
Cardiff	20:25-06:00
Exeter	20:25-06:02
Glasgow	20:36-05:57
Liverpool	20:27-05:56
London	20:13-05:48
Manchester	20:24-05:53
Newcastle	20:24-05:48
Norwich	20:09-05:40
Penzance	20:32-06:11
Sheffield	20:21-05:50

Weather Eye

Paul Simons

This week the Met Office announced provisional statistics about this summer, headlined by the UK's hottest summer on record in archives dating back to 1884. This was also the warmest summer in central England in records going back as far as 1659. And for added perspective, the epic summer of 1976 has now been relegated to the seventh hottest summer in the UK.

But despite the hosepipe bans and chronic drought, this was only the tenth driest summer for England and Wales since 1931. In fact, the west and north of Scotland had average or above average rainfall — no surprise that these were also the cloudiest regions of the UK.

The scorching summer over much of Britain did not happen in isolation. Unlike 1976, huge swathes of Europe were in the grip of even worse heatwaves and chronic lack of rain that fuelled raging wildfires.

High sea temperatures also led to marine heatwaves and continue to linger across the Mediterranean, with forecasts on land this week of highs reaching 35C in Rome and 33C in Madrid, while France set new September temperature records in several places on Tuesday including 35.9C at Monfort in the southwest. The high sea temperatures in the Mediterranean are expected to fuel severe storms this autumn.

Even the Arctic is unusually warm with 27.8C at Sholagonsky in Siberia on Tuesday, while Clyde River in Nunavut, Arctic Canada, hit 15.4C. Elsewhere, records were broken this month in Asia, Central America and South America where Lima in Peru recorded its hottest September night on Tuesday with 20.4C minimum.

It is now clear to most people that the world's climate has changed because of man-made pollution from fossil fuels, and diehard climate change sceptics are running out of excuses to explain the upsurge in global temperatures. The big question is, what is going to be done to stem the pollution driving this warming climate and bring temperatures under some sort of control?

Speak directly to one of our forecasters on 09065 777675

8am to 5pm daily (calls are charged at £1.55 plus network extras)

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Sport

Hampshire make U-turn on signing player cleared of rape

Cricket
Ivo Tennant

Hampshire decided to terminate Scott Kuggeleijn's contract just before he was due to make his debut after a backlash over rape allegations made against the New Zealand all-rounder 12 years ago.

Kuggeleijn, who was signed by the relegation-threatened county last week, was included in Hampshire's squad to face Warwickshire in the County Championship on Wednesday. However, the 34-year-old did not appear at the Utilita Bowl after supporters and staff criticised his arrival, with one calling it "a disgrace", and another as "shameful" and "a new low for the club".

Kuggeleijn was charged in 2015 with sexual violation by rape and indecent assault involving two separate complainants. He was acquitted after a second trial, after a hung jury in the first trial. In spite of this, his selection for New Zealand and domestic teams has repeatedly led to protests. In 2019, spectators at Eden Park held up posters objecting to him. He has spent the past 12 years playing for the Northern Districts in New Zealand.

Hampshire had flown him to England from Darwin, where he was playing last Friday, but will now be responsible for flying him home. "Having reflected and listened to feedback from our staff and supporters, Hampshire Cricket can confirm that Scott will not be representing us," a spokesman said. The club will pay for Kuggeleijn's return travel.

The club signed him for their four remaining County Championship matches after being told by the ECB that Sonny Baker, the England fast bowler, would not be permitted to play in their match against Warwickshire. Hampshire would not comment on whether the signing had been instigated by the GMR group, which has taken over the club from Rod Bransgrove, the long-standing benefactor. Kuggeleijn has also represented the Dubai Capitals, co-owned by GMR. His signing was not publicly announced this week but he was included among Hampshire's 15-man, which was announced on X.

When Kuggeleijn was considered for selection by his country after his second trial in 2017, the chief executive of New Zealand Cricket, David White, said they "respected the court process and were not in the business of relitigating past events".

He added: "[That] would be manifestly unfair on all parties involved. The court is the most appropriate forum for judging matters as serious as this." The position New Zealand Cricket took was criticised publicly and in the media.

Kuggeleijn has represented his country in three Tests, two one-day internationals and 18 T20s. Hampshire are bottom of Division One, 16 points behind Leicestershire, whom they still have to play.

Yesterday, they endured a tough day in the field after putting Warwickshire into bat. In the 41 overs possible before rain they managed to take just one wicket. Will Young went early, caught behind the wicket off Scott Currie, but Rob Yates and Dan Mousley saw off Kyle Abbott, who needs one more wicket to be the first to reach 50 in the Championship this season. When James Fuller came on, Yates pulled him for six. There were six fours in addition by the time he reached his half-century. Mousley was no less productive, striking nine fours in all in his unbeaten 68.

ALEXANDER HASSENSTEIN/GETTY IMAGES

La Vuelta hat-trick for Briton Brennan

Another sprint stage at La Vuelta, another win for Matthew Brennan in a dream grand tour debut for the 21-year-old. The man from Darlington has now made it a hat-trick at La Vuelta and is the first man to do so on his first grand tour since a certain Tadej Pogacar in 2019 at the same race (Sean Russell writes).

"I'm with a team full of massive champions," Brennan said after Wout van Aert launched him to victory in the stage in Lorca. "You've got guys who've Brennan added to his wins on stages two and five

been on podiums in grand tours and I'm really thankful they go full gas for me."

Backlash after Edgbaston Ashes tickets hiked up to £165

Elizabeth Ammon

Warwickshire have sparked an online backlash by increasing ticket prices to £165 to sit in the Hollies Stand for next year's Ashes Test at Edgbaston.

The ticket ballot for next year's marquee series against Australia opened yesterday with price increases across all five venues, with Warwickshire raising theirs the most. The 43 per cent hike for tickets in the Hollies Stand has led to criticism from fans on social media.

Warwickshire members can buy tickets for £92, but for the general public the cheapest adult ticket for the first three days is £115. In the Hollies Stand, which is famous for its loud party atmosphere and fancy dress, the price has gone up from £115 from 2023 to £165.

The county have defended the hike by saying that the entry-level ticket prices "roughly match inflation compared to the last time Australia visited Edgbaston in 2023 — but like the rest of the country, we're battling increased costs and trying to manage these wherever we can."

Although it is the venues themselves that set their ticket prices, rather than the ECB, the governing body has already been under fire because there is no Ashes Test north of Nottingham. The series will start at Trent Bridge on June 30 and then move on to Lord's, Edgbaston, Southampton, which will host its first Test against Australia, and the Oval.

At the Oval, Surrey have increased their tickets in line with inflation, with the most expensive seats £185 (£165 in 2023). At Trent Bridge, the most affordable general prices at £100 for the first three days and £85 for day four.

Cricket scoreboards

County Championship
Division One
Essex v Sussex
Chelmsford (first day of four; Sussex won toss): Sussex are 213 for 7
Sussex: First Innings
D P Hughes c Walter b Snater 45
*T J Haines c Pepper b Cook 4
T G R Clark c Pepper b Cook 0
C J Tear c Harmer b Porter 39
J M Coles c Pepper b Akhter 15
†J A Simpson lbw b Porter 17
J A Leaning not out 49
J J Carson c Walter b Porter 9
D C Goodman not out 22
Extras (b 4, lb 9) 13
Total (7 wkts, 86 overs) 213
A Karvelas and H T Crocombe to bat.
Fall of wickets 1-7, 2-7, 3-79, 4-109, 5-116, 6-149, 7-163.
Bowling Cook 15-8-21-2; Snater 18-6-45-1; Bennett 3-0-10-0; Akhter 17-6-37-1; Harmer 16-2-34-0; Porter 12-1-32-3; Critchley 5-0-21-0.
Essex: D Elgar, P I Walter, *T Westley, C W J Allison, M J J Critchley, †M S Pepper, S Snater, Z Akhter, C Bennett, S J Cook, S R Harmer, J A Porter.
Umpires: S Shanmugam & R J Warren.

Hampshire v Warwickshire
The Rose Bowl (first day of four; Hampshire won toss): Warwickshire are 141 for 1
Warwickshire: First innings
R M Yates not out 59
W A Young c Brown b Currie 3
D R Mousley not out 68
Extras (lb 7, nb 4) 11
Total (1 wkt, 41 overs) 141
S R Hain, V L Jani, *E G Barnard, †K Smith, M J Suthar, C R Woakes, E R Bamber and O J Hannon-Dalby to bat.
Fall of wicket 1-14.
Bowling Abbott 9-2-20-0; Jack 8-3-20-0; Currie 10-3-23-1; Fuller 6-0-35-0; Neal 8-0-36-0.
Hampshire: A G H Orr, N R T Gubbins, T E Albert, J S Lehmann, B A Mayes, *†B C Brown, J K Fuller, A J Neal, S W Currie, K J Abbott, E V Jack.
Umpires: M Burns & S J O'Shaughnessy.

Nottinghamshire v Leicestershire
Trent Bridge (first day of four; Leicestershire won toss): Nottinghamshire are 42 for 0
Nottinghamshire: First innings
*H Hameed not out 32
B T Slater not out 10
Extras 0
Total (0 wkts, 10.3 overs) 42
F W McCann, J M Clarke, J A Haynes, †K Verreynne, L A Patterson-White, F W Sheat, O P Stone, B A Hutton and D Y Pennington to bat.
Bowling Davey 5.3-1-26-0; Holland 5-0-16-0.
Leicestershire: R K Patel, S S E Gumbs, R Ahmed, H Shaikh, N F Kelly, S S Eskinazi, †O B Cox, *I G Holland, T A R Scriven, J H Davey, J O Hull.
Umpires: J D Middlebrook & N Pratt.

Somerset v Glamorgan
Taunton (first day of four; Somerset won toss): Somerset trail Glamorgan by 102 runs with 10 first-innings wickets remaining
Glamorgan: First Innings
A M Tribe c Rew b Pretorius 16
M S Crane c Abell b Overton 27
*K S Carlson c Nicholls b Pretorius 4
B I Kellaway c Nicholls b Pretorius 51
C A Ingram c Abell b Gregory 13
S R Dickson c Overton b Gregory 9
†C B Cooke c Abell b Overton 9
D A Douthwaite c Nicholls b Lammonby 18
T van der Gugten not out 22
C P H O'Riordan c Rew b Lammonby 0
M Hamza c Rew b Leach 18
Extras (lb 1, nb 6) 7
Total (59.2 overs) 194
Fall of wickets 1-33, 2-45, 3-49, 4-80, 5-123, 6-125, 7-150, 8-158, 9-158.
Bowling Gregory 17.3-3-58-2; Overton 18-3-63-2; Pretorius 16-5-45-3; Lammonby 7-0-27-2; Vaughan 0.3-0-0-0; Leach 0.2-0-0-1.
Somerset: First Innings
J F Thomas not out 46
T A Lammonby not out 37
Extras (lb 1, nb 8) 9
Total (no wkt, 23 overs) 92
L P Goldsworthy, H M Nicholls, T B Abell, †J E K Rew, A M Vaughan, C Overton, *L Gregory, M Pretorius and M J Leach to bat.
Bowling Van der Gugten 7-0-24-0; Hamza 4-1-22-0; Douthwaite 4-0-17-0; Kellaway 5-0-16-0; O'Riordan 3-0-12-0.
Umpires: M A Gough & N J Llong.

Surrey v Yorkshire
The Oval (first day of four; Surrey won toss): Yorkshire are 133 for 7
Yorkshire: First innings
A Lyth lbw b Fisher 1
W A Luxton c Foakes b Worrall 0
S M Whiteman lbw b Fisher 0
J H Wharton c Pope b Lawes 45
M L Revis c Chahar b Lawes 40
**†J M Bairstow c Pope b Worrall 3
G C H Hill c Foakes b Worrall 1
D M Bess not out 21
K Yadav not out 6
Extras (b 4, lb 10, nb 2) 16
Total (7 wkts, 59.5 overs) 133
B O Coad and C J White to bat.
Fall of wickets 1-1, 2-1, 3-1, 4-92, 5-101, 6-101, 7-113.
Bowling Worrall 17-6-24-3; Fisher 15.5-5-42-2; Dar 11-2-25-0; Lawes 13-3-22-2; Chahar 2-0-6-0; Thomas 1-1-0-0.
Surrey: *R J Burns, D P Sibley, J W Blake, O J D Pope, †B T Foakes, A R G Thomas, T E Lawes, R D Chahar, M D Fisher, D J Worrall, A N Dar.
Umpires: D J Millns & R A White.

Division Two
Gloucestershire v Derbyshire
Bristol (first day of four; Gloucestershire won toss): Gloucestershire are 62 for 5
Gloucestershire: First Innings
*C T Bancroft c Anderson b Randell 6
J P Phillips c Aitchison b Randell 10
O J Price b Aitchison 0
M A H Hammond lbw b Bashir 10
†J R Bracey not out 25
T W Boorman lbw b Bashir 0
E W O Middleton not out 8
Extras (b 1, lb 2) 3
Total (5 wkts, 31.0 overs) 62
R S Kishore, J P H Hayes, M D Taylor and W S A Williams to bat.
Fall of wickets 1-15, 2-18, 3-20, 4-37, 5-37.
Bowling Aitchison 10-2-23-1; Randell 6-3-11-2; Anderson 4-1-8-0; Bashir 9-3-14-2; Morley 2-0-3-0.
Derbyshire: H R C Came, M Y B Naeem, M Montgomery, *W L Madsen, M K Andersson, A H T Donald, †B D Guest, B W Aitchison, B G Randell, S Bashir, J P Morley.
Umpires: N Ashraf & P R Pollard.

Kent v Worcestershire
Canterbury (first day of four; Worcestershire won toss): Worcestershire trail Kent by 158 runs with 10 first-innings wickets remaining
Kent: First innings
B G Compton c Cullen b Taylor 8
Z Crawley c Hose b Allison 6
S A Northeast c Cullen b Finch 43
T S Muyeye c Waite b Finch 37
*D J Bell-Drummond lbw b Waite 52
†C G Benjamin c Cullen b Swanepoel 40
G Stewart c Cullen b White 19
K J Dudgeon c Cullen b Allison 8
M E Milnes c Allison b Taylor 7
H Mahmud not out 4
M R Quinn c Swanepoel b Taylor 1
Extras (b 8, lb 5) 13
Total (64.2 overs) 238
Fall of wickets 1-14, 2-18, 3-100, 4-103, 5-182, 6-213, 7-220, 8-233, 9-237, 10-238.
Bowling Taylor 14.2-1-55-3; Allison 15-4-45-2; Waite 14-2-42-2; Swanepoel 12-0-42-1; Finch 9-0-41-1.
Worcestershire: First innings
D H Lategan not out 35
J D Libby b Mahmud 18
R M Edavalath lbw b Mahmud 0
A J Hose not out 24
Extras (lb 3) 3
Total (2 wkts, 20.5 overs) 80
*B L D'Oliveira, †H J Cullen, M J Waite, B Swanepoel, T A I Taylor, B M J Allison and A W Finch to bat.
Fall of wickets 1-26, 2-26.
Bowling Milnes 5.5-1-26-0; Mahmud 7-3-29-2; Quinn 5-3-10-0; Dudgeon 3-0-12-0.
Umpires: M H A Syed & S Redfern.

Middlesex v Lancashire
Northwood (first day of four; Middlesex won toss): Middlesex are 139 for 3
Middlesex: First innings
S D Robson b Anderson 8
L B K Hollman not out 54
M D E Holden b Anderson 0
*J L du Plooy c Jennings b Balderson 41
B B A Geddes not out 23
Extras (nb 2, b 5, lb 6) 13
Total (3 wkts, 39.5 overs) 139
R F Higgins, †H G Duke, Z Gohar K, T S Roland-Jones, T G Helm and N Sharma to bat.
Fall of wickets 1-20, 2-20, 3-92.
Bowling Anderson 10-4-30-2; Bailey 13.5-2-45-0; Balderson 10-2-26-1; Walkden 6-0-27-0.
Lancashire: K K Jennings, †M F Hurst, H P N Singh, M S Harris, R Flintoff, A R Shetty, G P Balderson, B L Walkden, T E Bailey, N Ali, *J M Anderson.
Umpires: J D Shantry & S Widdup.

Northamptonshire v Durham
Northampton (first day of four; Durham won toss): Durham are 129 for 3
Durham: First innings
*A Z Lees lbw b Chahal 24
B S McKinney b Procter 4
W M H Rhodes run out (Sales) 1
D G Bedingham not out 57
M A Agarwal not out 25
Extras (nb 6, b 5, lb 7) 18
Total (3 wkts, 30.5 overs) 129
B A Stokes, C N Ackermann, †O G Robinson, K L Aldridge, M J Potts and C F Parkinson to bat.
Fall of wickets 1-14, 2-16, 3-75.
Bowling Sanderson 6.5-0-33-0; Procter 5-1-10-1; Sales 2-0-16-0; Chahal 9-2-23-1; McSweeney 2-0-3-0; Harrison 6-1-32-0.
Northamptonshire: R S Vasconcelos, *L A Procter, C G Harrison, N A McSweeney, S A Zaib, J J G Sales, G Bartlett, †L D McManus, B W Sanderson, Y S Chahal, L P J Kimber.
Umpires: B J Peverall & T Lungley.

Salisbury
Rob Wright

1.53 Decalogue
2.28 My Boy
3.03 Ahmadi
3.39 Learning
4.14 Miss Kodi
4.49 Cindy Lou Who
5.24 Boyfriend (nb)
5.55 Aleatrix

Going: good to soft, soft in places
Draw: no advantage **Racing TV**

1.53 Handicap (£4,580: 1m) (8)
1 (7) 15050 **CITY OF GOD** 21 (P,D) M Attwater 4-10-0 **J Glennon (5)**
2 (5) 266-2 **PRINCE RASAM** 99 G & J Moore 5-9-12 **Toby Moore**
3 (4) 656/0 **A LA NOCHE** 20 Oliver Cole 5-9-11 **Oliver Hoodless (5)**
4 (8) 03014 **THISCOULDBEFUN** 13 (P,CD) J S Moore 4-9-10 **Isobelle Chalmers**
5 (1) 00040 **SPECIAL GHAIYYATH** 20 (D) P Charalambous & J Clutterbuck 4-9-8 **J Bradnam**
6 (3) 6-043 **DECALOGUE** 28 J Osborne 3-9-8 **A Redman**
7 (6) -3640 **VIRTUE PATIENCE** 94 (P,BF) A Perrett 4-9-7 **Charlie Tucker**
8 (2) 0-220 **MUSASHI** 108 (BF) P Evans 3-9-4 **Amy Tucker (7)**
10-3 Prince Rasam, 4-1 Thiscouldbefun, 9-2 Decalogue, 11-2 others.
Rob Wright's choice: Decalogue, third at Newmarket, is unexposed at this trip **Dangers** Virtue Patience, City Of God

2.28 Novice Stakes (2-Y-O: £8,100: 1m) (9)
1 (6) **GENERAL WOLFE** E Walker 9-7 **K Shoemark**
2 (1) 4 **MY BOY** 27 A Balding 9-7 **O Murphy**
3 (5) 6 **VARDO** 29 (T) Owen Burrows 9-7 **L Edmunds**
4 (4) **CASHINOROYALE** (T) G Baker 9-5 **B Sayette**
5 (3) **LAURIGER** R Beckett 9-5 **Rossa Ryan**
6 (8) 533 **NIGHT STAR** 42 R Hannon 9-5 **P Dobbs**
7 (7) 6 **MULVANEY'S RETURN** 20 B Meehan 9-2 **David Egan**
8 (9) **ROCK IN JAPAN** R Beckett 9-2 **E Greatrex**
9 (2) 0 **THERE GOES MY HERO** 59 Kieran Burke 9-2 **Josephine Gordon**
13-8 Night Star, 9-2 General Wolfe, 11-2 My Boy, 6-1 Lauriger, 15-2 others.
Wright choice: My Boy is well bred and can build on a debut fourth at Newmarket **Dangers** Night Star, Genral Wolfe

3.03 Novice Stakes (2-Y-O: £8,100: 1m) (9)
1 (8) 4 **AHMADI** 29 R Beckett 9-7 **O Murphy**
2 (1) **PLAY AGAIN SAMMY** E J-Houghton 9-7 **R Clutterbuck**
3 (6) **ROSE MOON** R Beckett 9-7 **Rossa Ryan**
4 (9) 3 **HEREWARD** 21 B Meehan 9-5 **C T Keane**
5 (7) 5 **MINSMERE** 14 R Hannon 9-5 **J Leavy**
6 (3) 0 **MAD JACK** 19 E De Giles 9-2 **David Egan**
7 (4) **MISS FAITHFULL** (H) C Fellowes 9-2 **P Bradley**
8 (2) **CAELAN'S ROSE** A Balding 9-0 **R Hornby**
9 (5) 5 **MR BADGER** 21 M Tregoning 8-13 **H Davies**
6-4 Hereward, 5-1 Rose Moon, 7-1 Caelan's Rose, Ahmadi, 8-1 others.
Wright choice: Ahmadi needed the experience when fourth at Kempton **Dangers** Hereward, Mr Badger

3.39 Maiden Stakes (2-Y-O: £20,616: 7f) (9)
1 (9) **CONCURRENT** A Balding 9-2 **C T Keane**
2 (8) 0 **COSTA VERDE** 51 K P De Foy 9-2 **R Hornby**
3 (2) **ELLAVARA** R Beckett 9-2 **Rossa Ryan**
4 (6) 5 **LEARNING** 21 R Hannon 9-2 **P Dobbs**
5 (4) 2 **MISS MINIVER** 22 R Varian 9-2 **K Shoemark**
6 (1) **QUINTANA** Harry Charlton 9-2 **L Edmunds**
7 (5) **REVEILLEZ** Harry Eustace 9-2 **Kaiya Fraser**
8 (7) 3 **RUBYROO** 14 H Palmer 9-2 **David Egan**
9 (3) 2 **THI QAR** 26 J & T Gosden 9-2 **O Murphy**
11-4 Thi Qar, 4-1 Miss Miniver, 5-1 Concurrent, 6-1 Ellavara, 13-2 others.
Wright choice: Learning showed promise when fifth on her debut at Deauville **Dangers** Thi Qar, Miss Miniver

4.14 Dick Poole Stakes
(Group III: 2-Y-O fillies: £42,532: 6f) (11)
1 (9) 10620 **ACCLAMATION STAR** 20 (D) James Owen 9-2 **K Shoemark**
2 (11) 140 **DARK ISSUE** 40 (BF,D) R Hannon 9-2 **P Dobbs**
3 (1) 2015 **ELEVATING** 20 R Hannon 9-2 **J Leavy**
4 (5) 201 **FILLIPAS** 13 (CD) B Millman 9-2 **C T Keane**
5 (2) 35364 **HARLEQUIN SKY** 26 J Chapple-Hyam 9-2 **S De Sousa**
6 (10) 1 **IMPULSIVE SPIRIT** 16 P Evans 9-2 **R Hornby**
7 (7) 31 **LOLA DE VALENCE** 31 (D) B Millman 9-2 **L Edmunds**
8 (4) 1206 **LOVE IS** 41 (D) R Hughes 9-2 **O Murphy**
9 (6) 154 **MISS KODI** 14 (D) C Cox 9-2 **Rossa Ryan**
10 (3) 15030 **MISS LIZZY** 36 (D) C Fellowes 9-2 **P Bradley**
11 (8) 142 **NUIT D'ECLAIR** 26 (BF,D) K P De Foy 9-2 **David Egan**
2-1 Miss Kodi, 3-1 Nuit D'Eclair, 5-1 Dark Issue, 10-1 Harlequin Sky, 12-1 others.
Wright choice: Miss Kodi was a good fourth in the Lowther Stakes at York **Dangers** Nuit D'Eclair, Dark Issue

4.49 Fillies' Handicap (£20,616: 6f) (11)
1 (1) 30002 **HAVANA PUSEY** 19 (D) J Gallagher 6-10-0 **O Murphy**
2 (9) 55406 **BETTY CLOVER** 26 E J-Houghton 4-9-11 **O Carmichael (7)**
3 (5) -1101 **ZEN DIVA** 13 (CD) R Beckett 3-9-8 **Rossa Ryan**
4 (2) -0630 **STIMULATIVE TRIP** 39 D Menuisier 3-9-8 **S De Sousa**
5 (6) 22110 **MISS NIGHTCAP** 18 (T,D) E Smyth-Osborne 3-9-6 **R Hornby**
6 (3) 32150 **ALBAYDAA** 14 W Haggas 3-9-6 **H Davies**
7 (10) 00500 **CINDY LOU WHO** 24 (D) A Carroll 4-9-4 **W Carson**
8 (11) 23010 **FLEETWATER** 37 (CD) J S Moore 4-9-3 **David Egan**
9 (8) 0-100 **PASSING THOUGHT** 27 (D) E Walker 3-9-2 **K Shoemark**
10 (4) 06401 **ANGEL SHARED** 13 (D) Steph Hollinshead 5-8-13 **D Costello**
11 (7) 42216 **LYRA LEA** 20 (BF) B Millman 3-8-10 **L Edmunds**
11-4 Albaydaa, 11-2 Zen Diva, 6-1 Havana Pusey, 13-2 others.
Wright choice: Cindy Lou Who will relish the soft ground; has dropped in the weights **Dangers** Zen Diva, Betty Clover

5.24 Handicap (£9,450: 1m) (11)
1 (8) -0132 **BOYFRIEND** 33 (D) R Hannon 5-10-2 **P Dobbs**
2 (5) 0-000 **ONE SMACK MAC** 36 (H) J Osborne 4-10-2 **W Carver**
3 (4) 01514 **PRINCIPALITY** 4 (D) Harry Eustace 4-10-1 **Kaiya Fraser**
4 (1) -1006 **SKIPPER** 18 (B,D) H Al Jehani (UAE) 5-9-12 **K Shoemark**
5 (6) -6104 **POINT OF CONTACT** 23 (P,D) A Balding 4-9-11 **O Murphy**
6 (11) 615-5 **LOOKA** 26 (H) M Botti 3-9-9 **S De Sousa**
7 (2) 16421 **COLOURBAND** 21 (T,D) S & E Crisford 3-9-8 **Rossa Ryan**
8 (9) 2-404 **TIME LOOP** 75 (H,BF) W Haggas 5-9-7 **H Davies**
9 (10) 13-10 **SHIPBOURNE** 56 (BF) R Beckett 3-9-7 **C T Keane**
10 (7) 15020 **ZOFFANDIA** 83 (T,V,D) Kieran Burke 5-9-4 **Josephine Gordon**
11 (3) 4010 **ELECTRIC DREAMS** 35 (D) J Fanshawe 3-9-4 **David Egan**
15-8 Colourband, 5-1 Boyfriend, 7-1 Principality, 8-1 others.
Wright choice: Boyfriend was beaten just a neck in a strong race at Goodwood **Dangers** Point Of Contact, Looka

5.55 Handicap (£5,888: 1m 2f) (7)
1 (3) -0110 **REDBUD SIXTEEN** 62 (BF,CD) Charlie Pike 4-10-2 **E Greatrex**
2 (7) -6040 **ZGHARTA** 34 (D) A Balding 4-10-0 **O Murphy**
3 (2) 12 **ALEATRIX** 34 (BF,CD) R Beckett 3-9-12 **Rossa Ryan**
4 (5) 22313 **LUCKY CAMINO** 15 H Palmer 3-9-9 **H Davies**
5 (1) -6120 **CHAPTER** 15 (B,C,D) C Hills 3-9-5 **R Hornby**
6 (6) 2140 **LEONARDO BLU** 34 Tom Clover 3-9-5 **David Egan**
7 (4) 01215 **KAMAWAY** 42 (C) E J-Houghton 4-9-3 **R Clutterbuck**
11-4 Redbud Sixteen, 4-1 Aleatrix, Kamaway, 9-2 Zgharta, 7-1 others.
Wright choice: Aleatrix was a fair second at Newmarket; she should relish this softer ground **Danger** Kamaway

Haydock Park
Rob Wright

1.30 I'd Go Maniac
2.05 Sir Terry Hadley
2.40 Flying Pirate
3.17 One Shot Kodi (nap)
3.52 Powerful Force
4.25 Hoseki
5.00 Storm Point

Going: soft
Draw: no advantage **Racing TV**

1.30 Handicap (£4,222: 1m 4f) (13)
1 (11) 00211 **FLIGHTOFTHEPHOENIX** 6 (D) C Hills 4-11-5(5ex) **Mr J Hills (5)**
2 (1) 52431 **I'D GO MANIAC** 31 (P,D) A King 7-11-2 **Miss G King (5)**
3 (12) 3413- **RIBBLE RIVER** J47 (W,CD) Lizzie Quinlan 5-11-1 **Mr J Loughnane (7)**
4 (4) 05053 **AUSTRIAN THEORY** 17 (P,BF) T Easterby 7-11-1 **Mr T Easterby (3)**
5 (9) 10340 **ROLAND GARROS** 16 (B,T,D) Hayley Burton 5-10-12 **Mr C Murphy (5)**
6 (2) 11035 **ALPINE SIERRA** 38 (D) J Goldie 8-10-10 **Miss K Williams (5)**
7 (6) 00254 **REVELIO** 28 Tom Clover 4-10-8 **Mr H Callan**
8 (13) 05054 **SPIRIT CATCHER** 3 (BF) P Kirby 7-10-8 **Mr D Perrin (7)**
9 (5) 25121 **RECOBELLA** 20 (D) P Kirby 5-10-6 **N Cookson (5)**
10 (10) 32122 **STAR START** 3 (P,BF) R Carr 6-10-3 **Miss C Parker (5)**
11 (7) 24666 **SHAHBAZ** 17 (B,T,D) A Watson 6-10-3 **Miss B Hampson**
12 (8) -0000 **CAVALRY CALL** 28 P Morris 5-10-1 **Miss A Collier**
13 (3) 6-446 **RED DEREK** 81 (C) L Williamson 10-9-12 **Miss T Padgett (5)**
4-1 I'd Go Maniac, 5-1 Flightofthephoenix, 6-1 Recobella, 7-1 others.

2.05 Novice Stakes (2-Y-O: £7,020: 1m) (9)
1 (2) 1 **BURNING UP** 27 (CD) K R Burke 9-9 **C Lee**
2 (5) **AUSTIN** K Ryan 9-2 **T Eaves**
3 (8) **BEDFORD BENNY BOY** D Menuisier 9-2 **S M Levey**
4 (7) 5 **DANCING DUNES** 36 R Beckett 9-2 **C Bishop**
5 (1) **HANDS TO YOURSELF** M Bell 9-2 **H Crouch**
6 (4) **SIR TERRY HADLEY** C Johnston 9-2 **C Shepherd**
7 (3) **TIDAL FORCE** H Palmer 9-2 **D Probert**
8 (9) 55 **UNDER ARREST** 61 W Haggas 9-2 **T Marquand**
9 (6) **ZARAK CROWN** R & P Fahey 9-2 **O McSweeney**
7-4 Burning Up, 6-1 Zarak Crown, 7-1 Austin, Hands To Yourself, 10-1 others.

2.40 Novice Stakes (2-Y-O: £5,400: 7f) (7)
1 (4) 13 **FLYING PIRATE** 65 (P) E J-Houghton 9-8 **C Bishop**
2 (1) 31 **REFLECT ON GLORY** 31 K R Burke 9-8 **C Lee**
3 (3) 5 **MALIQUI** 16 C Fellowes 9-1 **T Marquand**
4 (5) 5 **ALL I KNOW** 14 Phillip Makin 8-13 **S James**
5 (6) **PERFECT GAL** R Menzies 8-13 **D Allan**
6 (7) 66 **LOPEFERNZA** 38 D Loughnane 8-12 **D Probert**
7 (2) **FRANKIE POWER** T Dascombe 8-10 **W Cox**
5-2 Flying Pirate, 11-4 Reflect On Glory, 9-2 All I Know, 7-1 Maliqui, 8-1 others.

3.17 Nursery (2-Y-O: £4,449: 7f) (12)
1 (4) 244 **TRIBAL APPEARANCE** 90 (T) Dr R Newland 9-9 **Jack Doughty**
2 (10) 22310 **KOODINI** 14 (P,D) H Palmer 9-8 **D Probert**
3 (7) 620 **VINERY** 28 O Greenall & J Guerriero 9-6 **C Bishop**
4 (5) 02300 **HIGH HAZARD** 14 (P) H Palmer 9-6 **S James**
5 (9) 56641 **KATIE'S CAVALIER** 25 (D) D Loughnane 9-5 **H Crouch**
6 (11) 00213 **GERRY'S DARLING** 27 (D) Roger Fell 9-4 **C Lee**
7 (2) 0264 **GREEN TITAN** 17 (P) G Boughey 9-4 **P Cosgrave**
8 (8) 453 **DIPLOMATA** 20 W Haggas 9-3 **T Marquand**
9 (6) 0015 **PEGGY'S LAD** 28 (D) I Jardine 9-1 **D Allan**
10 (12) 5266 **GREEK STREET** 17 Harry Eustace 9-1 **S M Levey**
11 (3) 004 **ONE SHOT KODI** 14 K Ryan 9-1 **T Eaves**
12 (1) 0630 **UNBEATABLE FAME** 17 R & P Fahey 8-11 **O McSweeney**
4-1 Katie's Cavalier, 11-2 Koodini, Green Titan, 7-1 others.

3.52 Novice Stakes (2-Y-O: £7,020: 6f) (8)
1 (4) **AL ARRAAB** R & P Fahey 9-2 **O McSweeney**
2 (2) **CHAPEL STREAM** J Chapple-Hyam 9-2 **C Shepherd**
3 (6) 344 **DEPUTY VICE** 68 (T) R Menzies 9-2 **Rhys Elliott (5)**
4 (7) 62 **DOES MARY KNOW** 19 E J-Houghton 9-2 **C Bishop**
5 (1) 0 **PLAYFULL WARRIOR** 24 C Cox 9-2 **H Crouch**
6 (5) **POWERFUL FORCE** K Ryan 9-2 **T Eaves**
7 (3) **SHARADD** W Haggas 9-2 **T Marquand**
8 (8) **TIME TO PLAY** K R Burke 9-2 **C Lee**
10-3 Sharadd, 4-1 Time To Play, 9-2 Chapel Stream, 6-1 Al Arraab, 7-1 others.

4.25 Fillies' Handicap (£15,462: 1m 2f) (7)
1 (2) 1-3U0 **LADY ROISIA** 61 R Beckett 3-9-9 **H Crouch**
2 (5) 004-0 **MISS TONNERRE** 99 (H) E Walker 4-9-8 **Ashley Lewis (3)**
3 (6) -1114 **HOSEKI** 26 (BF,D) W Haggas 3-9-7 **T Marquand**
4 (3) 32112 **STAR CAST** 24 (D) G Tutty 4-9-5 **J Dickson (5)**
5 (1) -6251 **HOLLYWELL STREAM** 33 (D) J Chapple-Hyam 3-9-4 **C Shepherd**
6 (7) 42121 **POLYGRAM** 13 T Davidson 4-9-1 **D Allan**
7 (4) 42234 **GEO** 26 (P) J Goldie 4-8-11 **Lauren Young (5)**
5-2 Hoseki, 10-3 Hollywell Stream, 7-2 Polygram, 5-1 Lady Roisia, 7-1 others.

5.00 Handicap (£5,757: 1m 2f) (14)
1 (9) 41-00 **SHARP MOVE** 6 (T,D) W Haggas 4-9-12 **T Marquand**
2 (4) 0010 **FREDDIE STEADY GO** 82 (T) S Corbett 5-9-12 **T Eaves**
3 (2) 24222 **NIGHTSINWHITESATIN** 48 (P,D) E Bethell 4-9-11 **C Horgan (5)**
4 (6) -6000 **MEHMAS CHAMPION** 18 D O'Meara 4-9-9 **D Probert**
5 (12) 01000 **HIGH POINT** 19 (C,D) I Jardine 5-9-9 **G Fairley**
6 (8) -4460 **IT'SNEVERJUSTONE** 37 D Loughnane 4-9-8 **H Crouch**
7 (11) 36146 **PEARL EYE** 24 (P,BF,C,D) J Goldie 6-9-8 **Lauren Young (5)**
8 (14) -0530 **POMME POMME** 12 (CD) J Channon 4-9-7 **C Lee**
9 (3) 02341 **POL ROGER** 26 (P,C,D) M Dods 6-9-7 **Rhys Elliott (5)**
10 (10) 5-465 **ARCADIAN NIGHTS** 28 (D) M Loughnane 8-9-7 **C Bishop**
11 (7) 1-605 **KNIGHT OF GLORY** 68 (B,E,H) D Menuisier 3-9-5 **S M Levey**
12 (13) 25030 **BLUE TO BLUE** 23 (C) Ruth Jefferson 3-9-4 **D Allan**
13 (1) 13-00 **NIGHT PATROL** 90 J Camacho 3-9-4 **S James**
14 (5) -1610 **STORM POINT** 56 (BF) E Walker 3-9-4 **Ashley Lewis (3)**
3-1 Nightsinwhitesatin, 7-2 Pol Roger, 11-2 Pearl Eye, 7-1 others.

Lingfield Park
Rob Wright

3.10 Princess Honey Bee
3.45 Sibling Revely
4.20 Noble View
4.55 Kamaal
5.30 Fabled Spirit
6.00 Searchingtheblues
6.30 Acclaimed Freedom
7.00 Lady Of Clover

Going: standard
Draw: no advantage **Sky Sports Racing**

3.10 Novice Stakes (£4,320: 1m) (5)
1 (3) 1- **HAMDANIA** 271 James Horton 3-9-9 **G Wood**
2 (5) 4-224 **PRINCESS HONEY BEE** 24 (BF) Craig Lidster 3-9-2 **S Osborne**
3 (2) **ALL SHALL BE WELL** Jack Jones 3-9-0 **Jason Watson**
4 (4) 06053 **BARBUDA BAY** 17 (B) R Teal 3-9-0 **J Mitchell**
5 (1) 502 **MYSTIC MUSIC** 24 A Balding 3-9-0 **N Currie**
2-1 Mystic Music, 9-4 Princess Honey Bee, 3-1 Hamdania, 7-1 others.

3.45 Handicap (£3,978: 1m 4f) (6)
1 (4) 16653 **TWILIGHT MOON** 35 (P,CD) M Tregoning 4-9-9 **M Ghiani**
2 (5) 050-5 **WILTSHIRE WONDER** 82 (D) B J Llewellyn & Robert Williams 6-9-9 **R Kavanagh (3)**
3 (1) 31005 **BIG BEAR HUG** 8 (D) J Boyle 7-9-7 **Olivia Haines (7)**
4 (2) 03422 **SIBLING RIVELRY** 14 (D) D M Simcock 4-9-6 **J Dace (5)**
5 (6) -5000 **ROMANTIC SPIRIT** 68 D Menuisier 4-9-2 **S Osborne**
6 (3) 00126 **MISTER DAYDREAM** 41 (CD) G & J Moore 5-9-1 **Jason Watson**
11-8 Sibling Rivelry, 3-1 Twilight Moon, 4-1 Mister Daydream, 8-1 others.

4.20 Handicap (£5,234: 5f) (6)
1 (3) 31100 **NOBLE VOW** 35 (D) R Hannon 3-9-11 **A Voikhansky**
2 (5) 32100 **TOOLATETONEGOTIATE** 41 (P,CD) Daisy Hitchins 4-9-11 **Millie Wonnacott (5)**
3 (6) 16-00 **FORAGER** 23 (CD) S Pearce 4-9-11 **J Mitchell**
4 (4) 35511 **WYLE COP** 19 (B,CD) Jack Jones 3-9-10 **Jason Watson**
5 (2) 55213 **DIOMED DUKE** 12 (T,D) S C Williams 4-9-8 **Olivia Haines (7)**
6 (1) -4110 **TRULY GLAMOROUS** 35 (D) C Mason 3-9-3 **G Mangan**
9-4 Wyle Cop, 11-4 Diomed Duke, 3-1 Truly Glamorous, 13-2 others.

4.55 Novice Stakes (2-Y-O: £7,020: 7f) (5)
1 (1) 6 **BLUE FOX** 12 Jack Jones 9-7 **G Wood**
2 (3) 500 **KAMAAL** 48 Jack Jones 9-7 **Jason Watson**
3 (5) 60 **LION OF GOD** 17 M Botti 9-7 **M Ghiani**
4 (4) 5 **MOUJ ALBUHOOR** 21 (BF) R Hughes 9-7 **F Marsh**
5 (2) **SATURN STAR** R Beckett 9-7 **S Osborne**
5-4 Mouj Albuhoor, 6-4 Kamaal, 4-1 Saturn Star, 25-1 others.

5.30 Handicap (£3,245: 2m) (7)
1 (6) 250-0 **LOST IN WONDER** 122 C Poulton 4-10-0 **T P Queally**
2 (5) 44056 **FURTHER MEASURE** 16 (P,CD) M Murphy 9-10-0 **M Ghiani**
3 (7) 53001 **CHARLES MORIN** 16 (B,C) P Phelan 5-9-7 **Liam Wright (3)**
4 (1) 03016 **ADA ROSE** 30 K P De Foy 3-9-2 **J Mitchell**
5 (2) 00032 **FABLED SPIRIT** 26 (P) A Watson 3-9-0 **G Mangan**
6 (3) 46004 **SIR GRIFLET** 26 (P,T) D Cunha 3-9-0 **S Osborne**
7 (4) 00000 **ROMEO'S GUARDIAN** 14 (B) H Palmer 3-8-4 **C Planas**
11-8 Fabled Spirit, 7-2 Charles Morin, 5-1 Ada Rose, Sir Griflet, 10-1 others.

6.00 Handicap (£3,978: 7f) (10)
1 (1) 44045 **DAISY ROOTS** 30 (C,D) J Boyle 6-9-9 **D J Murphy (7)**
2 (9) 43500 **IRONIST** 57 G Margarson 4-9-9 **S Osborne**
3 (8) 53400 **CIXI** 38 J Boyle 3-9-8 **J Mitchell**
4 (4) 03215 **SUGAR SUGAR** 23 (E) J Channon 3-9-7 **G Bass**
5 (3) 32635 **HAMALEEL** 17 (B) A Watson 3-9-7 **Conor Whiteley (5)**
6 (5) 2-203 **DARK BRUNETTE** 17 J Chapple-Hyam 3-9-7 **G Wood**
7 (6) 00302 **SEARCHINGTHEBLUES** 13 (P,D) M Usher 4-9-6 **G Mangan**
8 (7) FP000 **LILI MARLEEN** 15 (D) Jack Jones 4-9-6 **Jason Watson**
9 (2) 00616 **ESPANITA** 17 (H,D) C Johnston 3-9-5 **O Stammers**
10 (10) 00533 **ANGELS' SHARE** 17 (CD) W Knight 3-9-4 **M Ghiani**
10-3 Sugar Sugar, 7-2 Angels' Share, 11-2 Searchingtheblues, 6-1 others.

6.30 Handicap (3-Y-O: £3,978: 6f) (8)
1 (2) 62462 **ACCLAIMED FREEDOM** 16 (BF) G Scott 9-9 **M Ghiani**
2 (1) 310-5 **ROMEO MONTAGUE** 210 (CD) R Spencer 9-9 **S Osborne**
3 (7) 21441 **COME ON OVER** 12 (V,D) D O'Meara 9-8 **Conor Whiteley (5)**
4 (8) 1034 **BUCKLOW HILL** 42 (T,CD) C Hills 9-8 **Jason Watson**
5 (5) 40116 **WATCHDOG** 99 (D) R & P Fahey 9-7 **J F Egan**
6 (3) -2020 **PILGRIM'S PROGRESS** 21 R Hannon 9-1 **A Voikhansky**
7 (6) 22503 **GO LOCKERS GO** 26 (D) M Bell 9-0 **G Wood**
8 (4) 54023 **FAR TOO FIZZY** 2 (BF,CD) D Loughnane 8-12 **Laura Pearson**
10-3 Acclaimed Freedom, 7-2 Come On Over, 4-1 Far Too Fizzy, 11-2 others.

7.00 Handicap (£3,245: 1m 2f) (7)
1 (6) 40666 **SALIKO** 17 (D) Jack Jones 4-9-10 **S Osborne**
2 (2) 03420 **THE BAY WARRIOR** 67 (P,BF,C,D) M Usher 8-9-10 **G Mangan**
3 (3) 41560 **MUY MUY LOCO** 14 (H,CD) S Dow 4-9-8 **T Heard**
4 (7) 55214 **HAVEAGOBEAU** 20 (CD) J Boyle 7-9-6 **J Dace (5)**
5 (1) 31431 **LADY OF CLOVER** 12 (H,C) G Scott 3-9-5 **Liam Wright (3)**
6 (4) -6642 **BOSTON RUN** 17 (BF) S Dow 4-9-5 **M Ghiani**
7 (5) 02520 **CELTIC SPIRIT** 20 (P) K Jewell 4-9-4 **F Marsh**
6-4 Lady Of Clover, 7-2 Boston Run, 4-1 Haveagobeau, 15-2 others.

Newcastle
Rob Wright

1.42 Porter's Song
2.17 Junkyard Dog
2.52 Interstate
3.24 Home Secretary
3.59 Mussab
4.35 Willowinghurn
5.10 Liquid Cooled
5.40 Little Beck Annie
6.15 Harb

Going: standard
Draw: no advantage **Sky Sports Racing**

1.42 Handicap (£3,245: 1m 4f) (9)
1 (8) 1P024 **GEMINI MAN** 27 (BF,C,D) I Jardine 8-9-9 **A Mullen**
2 (2) 35244 **BRUCE BANNER** 49 (P,CD) R Menzies 4-9-9 **D Muscutt**
3 (1) -2000 **BOUBOULE** J74 (P) G Boanas 4-9-8 **T Kiely-Marshall (5)**
4 (6) 61461 **LAWMANS BLIS** 8 (D) Jessica Macey 8-9-8(4ex) **E Tindall (5)**
5 (9) 05000 **BRUNELLO BREEZE** 14 (P,CD) L Bailey 7-9-7 **B Garritty**
6 (4) 56506 **PORTER'S SONG** 37 L Bailey 4-9-7 **D Nolan**
7 (7) 6-411 **SATYRESS** 23 (D) H Bethell 4-9-6 **S D Bowen**
8 (3) 06452 **MR WITHINGTON** 8 (B) Ewan Whillans 5-9-4 **C Beasley**
9 (5) 000-0 **NEDDIES BOY** 200 (P,T,D) D Bourke 8-9-1 **Shane Gray**
7-4 Satyress, 10-3 Mr Withington, 7-2 Lawmans Blis, 5-1 others.

2.17 Handicap (£3,978: 1m 2f) (9)
1 (2) 4-113 **SHIMMERING SANDS** 27 (D) M & D Easterby 7-9-9 **B Garritty**
2 (6) 10205 **MAO SHANG WONG** 31 (CD) D O'Meara 4-9-8 **M Winn**
3 (4) 12502 **AMIDST THE CHAOS** 19 (BF) N Tinkler 4-9-8 **R Scott**
4 (7) 21125 **MWAFAQ** 12 (P) R & P Fahey 4-9-7 **E Tindall (5)**
5 (9) 306-0 **RODOYA** 231 (B) J Camacho 4-9-7 **R Sexton**
6 (8) 33465 **QITAAL** 19 (V,D) C Johnston 7-9-6 **C Beasley**
7 (1) 5-000 **LIVONIAN** 76 (W,T) F Murtagh 4-9-4 **Shane Gray**
8 (3) 0-021 **JUNKYARD DOG** 28 (V,D) I Jardine 4-9-2 **A Mullen**
9 (5) 02044 **FINLAGGAN** 69 (P) D O'Meara 4-9-2 **K Stott**
11-4 Junkyard Dog, 7-2 Shimmering Sands, Amidst The Chaos, 11-2 others.

2.52 Novice Stakes (£6,480: 1m 2f) (4)
1 (4) 02-22 **INTERSTATE** 28 (B) J & T Gosden 3-9-7 **R Havlin**
2 (3) 42 **QUIET SUMMER** 15 A Balding 3-9-7 **D Muscutt**
3 (2) 63 **TREBLE BASS** 29 R Varian 3-9-7 **S D Bowen**
4 (1) **BRITTUNCULI** T Waggott 3-9-2 **W Pyle**
Evens Interstate, 6-5 Quiet Summer, 7-1 Treble Bass, 66-1 Brittunculi.

3.24 Handicap (£3,978: 2m) (4)
1 (2) 10-00 **IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU** J67 (T,D) Ewan Whillans 6-10-2 **R Scott**
2 (1) 53103 **TARBAT NESS** 20 (B,CD) J Berry 7-9-13 **P Mulrennan**
3 (4) 0/0-0 **SHARONA** 13 (T) J Bedi 5-9-3 **W Pyle**
4 (3) 0-551 **HOME SECRETARY** 59 (V,D) Sir M Prescott 3-8-13 **D E Hogan**
1-2 Home Secretary, 5-2 Tarbat Ness, 8-1 It's All About You, 50-1 Sharona.

3.59 Novice Stakes (2-Y-O: £5,400: 5f) (9)
1 (1) **CAELUM** K Ryan 9-7 **K Stott**
2 (8) **CYBERSPACE** B Smart 9-7 **P Mulrennan**
3 (6) 336 **MUSSAB** 13 R & P Fahey 9-7 **Oisin Orr**
4 (2) 05 **PERFECT STRIKE** 8 (BF) W Haggas 9-7 **D Muscutt**
5 (9) 05 **TAJ MAHAL PALACE** 19 B Ellison 9-7 **C Beasley**
6 (5) **AETERNITAS** M & D Easterby 9-2 **B Garritty**
7 (4) 00 **GOLDEN BUZZ** 75 B Haslam 9-2 **A Mullen**
8 (7) 6 **ONE MORE TILDA** 22 I Furtado 9-2 **B McHugh**
9 (3) 22044 **WHAT A GIRL WANTS** 21 (H,BF) N Tinkler 9-2 **R Scott**
4-7 Mussab, 7-2 What A Girl Wants, 7-1 Caelum, 10-1 others.

4.35 Handicap (£3,245: 7f) (14)
1 (3) 5040- **MRBLUESKY** 324 (CD) Gary Rutherford 4-9-9 **A Mullen**
2 (4) 50236 **TURBO COMMAND** 7 (CD) Mrs A C Hamilton 9-9-8 **P Mulrennan**
3 (12) 05603 **WILLOWINGHURN** 13 (V,D) D O'Meara 3-9-8 **M Winn**
4 (2) 0-640 **BLAIRTUM NIGHT** 15 (P) Miss L Perratt 4-9-7 **Finlay Bassett (7)**
5 (10) 03362 **VICTORY SOUND** 16 (P,D) M Usher 4-9-6 **C Beasley**
6 (11) 10040 **BIZARRE LAW** 8 (P,D) M Herrington 7-9-5 **K Stott**
7 (1) 345 **NDOTO** 118 R & P Fahey 3-9-4 **Oisin Orr**
8 (6) /6500 **FAIR ISLE SIOUX** 12 A Nicol 6-9-4 **B Garritty**
9 (14) 00000 **BANTZ** 10 (B,CD) A Brown 4-9-2 **R Scott**
10 (5) 03664 **YAAHOBBY** 181 (T,CD) A Brittain 7-9-2 **C Hardie**
11 (9) 36030 **FOREVER TWENTY** 49 (W,T) I Furtado 3-9-1 **J Peate**
12 (13) 60300 **POWER OF CHORA** 39 Jessica Macey 3-9-0 **E Tindall (5)**
13 (7) 0406 **MAID ON THE SHELF** 61 C Johnston 3-8-12 **S D Bowen**
14 (8) 660 **SHATIN BEAUTY** 34 Miss L Perratt 3-8-12 **Doubtful**
11-4 Willowinghurn, 7-2 Victory Sound, 7-1 Ndoto, 15-2 Yaahobby, 10-1 others.

5.10 Handicap (£3,245: 6f) (9)
1 (7) 00400 **REENIE'S DREAM** 15 (H,BF) B Smart 4-9-9 **P Mulrennan**
2 (3) 06016 **ASADJUMEIRAH** 14 (P,T,CD) A Brittain 8-9-8 **E Tindall (5)**
3 (9) 34655 **NORTHERN TEMPEST** 15 (T,V) M Dods 3-9-6 **C Beasley**
4 (1) 03362 **VICTORY SOUND** 16 (V) M Usher 4-9-5 **Doubtful**
5 (2) 14356 **LIQUID COOLED** 27 (CD) B Haslam 3-9-4 **A Mullen**
6 (6) 4005 **TOMMIE'S ANGEL** 35 R Menzies 3-9-4 **T Kiely-Marshall (5)**
7 (5) 40001 **DREAM FOREVER** 15 (B,D) J O'Keeffe 3-9-2 **J Nicholls (3)**
8 (8) 60000 **GLOBAL EFFORT** 2 (T,V,D) P McEntee 6-9-1 **Grace McEntee**
9 (4) 04060 **NEWYORKSTATEOFMIND** 14 (C,D) R Carr 9-9-1 **W Pyle**
5-2 Dream Forever, 7-2 Asadjumeirah, 4-1 Northern Tempest, 11-2 others.

5.40 Handicap (Div 2) (£3,245: 6f) (9)
1 (4) 00004 **EM JAY KAY** 10 (P,CD) P McEntee 7-9-9 **Grace McEntee**
2 (9) 50-22 **TOMORROW DAY** 176 (T,V,BF,CD) M Usher 5-9-8 **C Beasley**
3 (6) 4-015 **LITTLE BECK ANNIE** 69 (P,BF,D) P Niven 4-9-7 **M Winn**
4 (1) 20-26 **UNCLE SAM** 64 (CD) R Craggs 4-9-6 **Oisin Orr**
5 (8) 04503 **RAIN CAP** 30 (V,D) J Riches 9-9-5 **E Tindall (5)**
6 (3) 65524 **TICKETS** 27 (T,CD) P Neville 7-9-4 **A Mullen**
7 (5) 40435 **DESERT MASTER** 14 (V,C) A Brittain 5-9-2 **C Hardie**
8 (2) 00505 **AURORA'S DOUBLESIX** 8 (H) B Rothwell 4-9-2 **F McManoman**
9 (7) 000-0 **SADIIKI** 119 (H) F Watson 5-9-2 **R Sexton**
5-2 Tomorrow Day, 7-2 Tickets, 5-1 Little Beck Annie, 6-1 others.

6.15 Handicap (£3,245: 5f) (8)
1 (2) 64000 **MUKER** 17 (CD) N Tinkler 8-9-9 **A Jary (3)**
2 (6) 04521 **HARB** 4 (CD) T Davidson 7-9-9(4ex) **R Scott**
3 (1) -0005 **SPEEDING BULLET** 37 P Midgley 5-9-6 **D Nolan**
4 (4) 36030 **DC COGENT** 45 (CD) B Smart 4-9-6 **P Mulrennan**
5 (5) 06015 **TOO MUCH** 14 (H,CD) D Thompson 6-9-5 **C Beasley**
6 (7) 55020 **HURT YOU NEVER** 23 (CD) Adrian Nicholls 7-9-4 **J Nicholls (3)**
7 (3) 10050 **DANDY DINMONT** 45 (CD) N Tinkler 7-9-3 **F McManoman**
8 (8) 0/000 **KHABIB** 33 (P,CD) R Craggs 8-9-1 **Oisin Orr**
11-10 Harb, 7-2 Too Much, 8-1 Speeding Bullet, Hurt You Never, 10-1 others.

Southwell
Rob Wright

4.30 Gwen Tennyson
5.05 Black Orchid
5.35 Grand Pier
6.10 Castlemont
6.40 Enola Grey
7.10 Franschoek
7.40 Exotic Baby
8.10 Kirkdale

Going: standard
Draw: 6f-1m, low best **Sky Sports Racing**

4.30 Handicap (£3,245: 5f) (7)
1 (1) 22422 **STARTLING** 26 (B,D) J Wainwright 4-9-9 **J Hart**
2 (7) 21440 **INVINCIBLE CROWN** 17 (D) R Carr 4-9-5 **JP Sullivan**
3 (5) 15141 **WHAT A TAHOO** 12 (D) R & P Fahey 3-9-4 **W Fentiman (3)**
4 (4) 00263 **GWEN TENNYSON** 10 G Tutty 3-8-11 **Joanna Mason**
5 (6) 6-035 **BUST A MOON** 26 (H,D) D Shaw 4-8-9 **D Keenan**
6 (2) 40666 **POETIC JACK** 34 (P) R Cowell 6-8-9 **K O'Neill**
7 (3) 00003 **MIMIME** 17 (P) M Appleby 3-8-8 **L Morris**
9-4 What A Tahoo, 3-1 Startling, 9-2 Gwen Tennyson, 7-1 others.

5.05 Novice Stakes (£5,400: 5f) (7)
1 (7) 0 **BEAUTIFUL RUMOUR** 18 S Dixon 4-9-7 **K O'Neill**
2 (6) 353/ **ELYAM** 740 M Herrington 4-9-7 **J Hart**
3 (3) **BLUE MOON DIAMOND** Joey Ramsden 3-9-6 **Mason Paetel (3)**
4 (1) 4 **MISS VERONIKA** 14 B Ellison 4-9-2 **H Russell**
5 (4) 0 **ATOMIK** 18 (T) Joey Ramsden 3-9-1 **D Tudhope**
6 (5) 222 **BLACK ORCHID** 18 R & P Fahey 3-9-1 **B Loughnane**
7 (2) 53044 **GRIS DE CHINE** 22 (T) Zoe Hawkins 3-9-1 **C Hutchinson**
8-13 Black Orchid, 10-3 Elyam, 10-1 Gris De Chine, 12-1 Atomik, 14-1 others.

5.35 Handicap (3-Y-O: £3,978: 1m 4f) (7)
1 (7) 4-332 **ROKER ROAR** 21 A Balding 9-9 **C Hutchinson**
2 (2) 00424 **MUCH** 27 (T) J Fanshawe 9-8 **B Loughnane**
3 (6) 6540 **FIEFDOM** 59 S Woods 9-7 **L Morris**
4 (4) 02314 **AL MASLOOL** 25 (B,D) W Haggas 9-5 **D Keenan**
5 (5) -5233 **MR MOONSHINE** 21 R & P Fahey 9-3 **C Rodriguez**
6 (3) 55-40 **CHOIR BOY** 17 (V) A Brittain 8-13 **H Russell**
7 (1) -0621 **GRAND PIER** 7 W Greatrex 8-13 **Harry Vigors (5)**
6-5 Grand Pier, 7-2 Roker Roar, 13-2 Al Maslool, 7-1 Mr Moonshine, 15-2 others.

6.10 Novice Stakes (£6,480: 1m 4f) (8)
1 (8) 5 **LIAM MERA KAI** 107 W Greatrex 5-9-12 **Harry Vigors (5)**
2 (6) 40-32 **MAESTRO DEL MAR** 22 I Mohammed & J Santos 4-9-12 **K S McHugh (7)**
3 (1) 1 **CASTLEMONT** 45 C Appleby 3-9-11 **B Loughnane**
4 (5) 0 **CRYSTAL JET** J46 T Bulgin 4-9-7 **G Downing**
5 (4) 24 **LUCY THE WIRE** 15 James Owen 4-9-7 **Mason Paetel (3)**
6 (7) **ARCO SANCHO** (W) I Furtado 3-9-4 **J Hart**
7 (2) 243 **STAR OF THE DESERT** 18 Joey Ramsden 3-9-4 **C Rodriguez**
8 (3) 542 **WALKING ON STARS** 21 Sir M Prescott 3-8-13 **L Morris**
6-5 Castlemont, 3-1 Walking On Stars, 5-1 Star Of The Desert, 7-1 others.

6.40 Fillies' Handicap (£5,234: 1m) (9)
1 (7) 24614 **GREAT MATES** 44 (H,D) M Botti 4-9-10 **B Loughnane**
2 (9) 0-522 **THE THIRD STAR** 56 (BF,C) Owen Burrows 4-9-10 **C Rodriguez**
3 (4) -1223 **CHANTELLE** 20 (P,BF) Sir M Prescott 3-9-9 **L Morris**
4 (1) 62322 **LUMINARE** 48 W Haggas 3-9-6 **D Keenan**
5 (5) 06026 **ALESSIA FERNANDA** 20 (T,CD) D Carroll 6-9-5 **Z Wheatley**
6 (3) 66000 **ENOLA GREY** 33 (CD) G Tutty 6-9-4 **Joanna Mason**
7 (6) -0000 **BEAUTY BY MY SIDE** 22 (D) J Parr 4-9-1 **Mason Paetel (3)**
8 (8) -1025 **BORJINA** 36 E Bethell 3-9-1 **D Tudhope**
9 (2) -3316 **ALTERITY** 42 (D) C Johnston 3-9-1 **J Hart**
5-2 Luminare, 7-2 The Third Star, 4-1 Chantelle, 13-2 Great Mates, 15-2 others.

7.10 Handicap (£5,154: 1m) (9)
1 (5) 20014 **HALE END** 26 (P,CD) M Dods 6-10-0 **S B Kirrane**
2 (9) 46-25 **KALAMUNDA** 63 (P,CD) J Parr 6-10-0 **D Keenan**
3 (3) 02250 **KALEIDO** 12 (T) D O'Meara 4-9-13 **D Tudhope**
4 (8) 1-125 **HOT AND COLD** 41 (BF,D) Sir M Prescott 3-9-10 **L Morris**
5 (4) 31 **FRANSCHHOEK** 16 J Fanshawe 3-9-8 **B Loughnane**
6 (6) 11300 **ROARING RALPH** 20 (P,CD) M Dods 6-9-8 **Joanna Mason**
7 (7) 243-3 **SAVILE ROW** 18 (T,V) A Brittain 3-9-6 **H Russell**
8 (2) 00642 **AMERICAN STATE** 44 (CD) I Furtado 4-9-4 **J Hart**
9 (1) 503-0 **DOUBLE EAGLE** 15 M Wigham 3-8-6 **K O'Neill**
9-4 Franschhoek, 4-1 Hot And Cold, 9-2 American State, 6-1 Hale End, 8-1 others.

7.40 Handicap (3-Y-O: £3,978: 7f) (9)
1 (2) -2000 **CHALE CHALO** 38 (P,D) T Dascombe 9-9 **J Hart**
2 (6) 02-46 **PISCEAN STAR** 14 (D) E Dunlop 9-8 **B Loughnane**
3 (8) 22221 **KORBUT** 13 (D) Sir M Prescott 9-7 **L Morris**
4 (5) 53313 **INDEFENSIBLE** 20 (D) O Pears 9-5 **H Russell**
5 (4) 21300 **TACTICAL BLITZ** 83 (P) L Bailey 9-4 **D Tudhope**
6 (7) 04500 **EXOTIC BABY** 38 (C) I Williams 9-3 **Faleh Bughanaim**
7 (1) 326-5 **LIEUTENANT KIJE** 22 T Ward 9-3 **Harry Vigors (5)**
8 (9) 53160 **BLACK ENDEAVOUR** 26 (T) M Rimell 9-2 **C Rodriguez**
9 (3) 35000 **SOUTHERN WARRIOR** 18 Olly Williams 8-9 **W Fentiman (3)**
Evens Korbut, 5-1 Indefensible, 15-2 Piscean Star, 10-1 others.

8.10 Handicap (£5,234: 6f) (12)
1 (8) 02002 **MOVING FORCE** 34 M Loughnane 4-9-11 **B Loughnane**
2 (12) 05660 **STAR CHORUS** 24 (CD) M Murphy 4-9-10 **D Keenan**
3 (1) 6-060 **DILIGENT RESDEV** 75 (D) M & D Easterby 5-9-9 **Joanna Mason**
4 (4) 4-411 **KIRKDALE** 145 (V,CD) E Bethell 4-9-8 **C Rodriguez**
5 (5) 52364 **PAPA COCKTAIL** 19 (CD) M Herrington 7-9-7 **J Hart**
6 (6) 01025 **TYGER BAY** 5 (B,T,D) C Allen 9-9-6 **S C Cronin (5)**
7 (3) 56311 **MODERN TIMES** 20 (V,CD) James Owen 5-9-5 **L Morris**
8 (9) 51141 **FLOWSTATE** 181 (D) D O'Meara 5-9-5 **A Rawlinson**
9 (2) -0600 **PRINCE OF PILLO** 59 (CD) R & P Fahey 6-9-4 **J Garritty**
10 (7) 12000 **ROCK OPERA** 19 (BF,CD) R & P Fahey 6-9-2 **W Fentiman (3)**
11 (10) 12010 **DORNEY LAKE** 19 (T,CD) L Bailey 5-9-2 **D Tudhope**
12 (11) 60006 **BEAUZON** 12 (D) I Williams 7-9-0 **Faleh Bughanaim**
4-1 Modern Times, 11-2 Flowstate, 13-2 Kirkdale, 8-1 Moving Force, 10-1 others.

Yesterday's racing results

Bath
Going: Good
2.00 (5f 160yd) 1, **Etienne** (Saffie Osborne, 1-25 fav); 2, Polly The Sniper (33-1); 3, Our Fella (33-1). 6 ran. 4½l, 47½l. R Spencer.
2.30 (5f 160yd) 1, **Rinky Tinky Tinky** (Alice Bond, 11-1); 2, The Feminine Urge (5-1); 3, My Boy Jack (13-2). 8 ran. NR: Anglesey Lad. nk, nk. Mrs I G-Leveque.
3.00 (5f 160yd) 1, **Geemann** (Taylor Fisher, 3-1 fav); 2, Honour Your Dreams (6-1); 3, Ten Cuidado (50-1). 9 ran. 2l, ½l. J Tickle.
3.30 (5f 10yd) 1, **Recon Mission** (L Morris, 9-1); 2, Fancy Dancer (11-2); 3, Symbol of Hope (9-1). 8 ran. NR: Hi Hoh Tonto, Mart. nk, 1¼l. A W Carroll.
4.00 (1m 6f) 1, **Fram Castle** (Alexandra Egan, 10-3); 2, Basilette (2-1); 3, Just Adair (13-8 fav). 10 ran. hd, 6½l. M Wigham.
4.30 (1m) 1, **Buckland Belle** (Tom Marquand, 5-6); 2, Blue Hero (12-1); 3, Who Is Alice (40-1). 11 ran. NR: Sceptic, Thestral. sh, 2¼l. Ollie Sangster.
5.02 (1m 3f 137yd) 1, **Pierian** (Tom Marquand, 11-4); 2, Asset (9-2); 3, Aravalli (7-1). 6 ran. 1½l, ½l. W J Haggas.
5.35 (1m 3f 137yd) 1, **Belle Amie** (Callum Shepherd, 7-4 fav); 2, Shaffron (4-1); 3, Trojan Truth (18-1). 6 ran. 2½l, 1½l. D M Simcock.
Placepot: £43.60 Quadpot: £11.00

Hamilton Park
Going: Soft
4.50 (5f 7yd) 1, **Sod Hall Lane** (Zak Wheatley, 11-8); 2, Royal Strike (11-10); 3, Bacha (7-1). 7 ran. 2¼l, 2¼l. D Carroll.
5.20 (6f 6yd) 1, **Big Apple Jack** (Billy Garritty, 11-2); 2, Lumenbourg (11-2); 3, Valentine Catcher (7-2 fav). 13 ran. 1l, sh. M & D Easterby.
5.50 (1m 5f 16yd) 1, **Perseus Way** (Rowan Scott, 2-1); 2, Spanish Hustle (11-1); 3, Ebony Maw (9-1). 12 ran. nk, 17½l. T Davidson.
6.20 (6f 6yd) 1, **Trumpety Trump** (Lauren Young, 22-1); 2, Sea Mirage (8-1); 3, Battle Fever (1-1 fav). 8 ran. ½l, 1¼l. J S Goldie.
6.50 (6f 6yd) 1, **Annie Edson Taylor** (S H James, 7-1); 2, Diamont Katie (9-2); 3, Invincible Ruby (11-2). 9 ran. NR: Whiskey Kisses. 1¼l, nk. Phillip Makin.
7.20 (1m 68yd) 1, **Tee Aitch Aye** (Jack Nicholls, 7-4 fav); 2, Aurelune (12-1); 3, Scheffler (150-1). 10 ran. 37½l, 2½l. I Jardine.
7.50 (1m 3f 15yd) 1, **Uncle Liam** (D Tudhope, 5-2); 2, Dandy's Angel (7-1); 3, Hickton (25-1). 4 ran. NR: Dubai Venture. J S Goldie.
Placepot: £20.70 Quadpot: £10.50
Jackpot: £0.00

Kempton Park
Going: Standard/slow
5.30 (7f) 1, **Unionville** (Owen Lewis, 12-1); 2, Orange Emperor (3-1); 3, Chapman's Peak (5-1). 6 ran. NR: Musical Soldier, Something Coming. ¾l, ½l. M J Attwater.
6.00 (7f) 1, **Charlemont Gg** (Marco Ghiani, 11-1); 2, Gold Army (9-4); 3, Or Ever (18-1). 10 ran. NR: Le Drakkar. 1l, nk. M Botti.
6.30 (6f) 1, **Sierra Belle** (Rossa Ryan, 2-1 fav); 2, I Am Royal (11-1); 3, Al Widyan (7-2). 12 ran. ¾l, sh. R M Beckett.
7.00 (1m 2f 219yd) 1, **Fortitudine** (W Buick, 1-4 fav); 2, Shadow Road (5-1); 3, Brave Hunter (10-1). 6 ran. 2¼l, 4¼l. C Appleby.
7.30 (6f) 1, **Remi Mae** (Oisin Murphy, 10-3); 2, Amelia's Joy (4-1); 3, Startled Lady (17-2). 7 ran. sh, ½l. A M Balding.
8.00 (7f) 1, **Aigeas** (Mason Paetel, 33-1); 2, Manly Fireball (14-1); 3, Blakefell (6-4). 7 ran. NR: Comic Hero. ½l, nk. Oliver Cole.
8.30 (1m 2f 219yd) 1, **Joseph** (D Egan, 5-1); 2, Madjid (4-9); 3, Pershalla (13-2). 5 ran. 5½l, 7½l. J Butler.
Placepot: £1,557.10 Quadpot: £92.50

Newcastle
Going: Standard
1.45 (1m 2f 43yd) 1, **Koko Blue** (Molly Keegan-Price, 11-8); 2, Ravenscraig Castle (5-1); 3, It's A Love Thing (11-1). 7 ran. 47½l, ¾l. Tom Clover.
2.15 (1m 2f 42yd) 1, **Rugby Union** (Joanna Mason, 10-3); 2, Gifts Differing (15-2); 3, Dalamara (3-1 fav). 12 ran. ½l, 1l. G Tutty.
2.45 (6f 1yd) 1, **Yordan** (Harry Vigors, 2-13 fav); 2, Brash (6-1); 3, Triple P (40-1). 10 ran. 6½l, 1¼l. K A Ryan.
3.15 (7f 15yd) 1, **Beattie Is Back** (Warren Fentiman, 3-1 fav); 2, Highland Shah (4-1); 3, Havana Prince (13-2). 12 ran. 1¼l, 3l. R A Fahey.
3.45 (6f 1yd) 1, **Bladey Lady** (D Fentiman, 28-1); 2, Claret Time (7-1); 3, Yorkshire Dream (12-1). 11 ran. ¾l, ½l. T D Easterby.
4.15 (1m 5yd) 1, **Sunriseontheboyne** (A Mullen, 9-2); 2, Starliner (10-1); 3, Criminal Shore (4-1 fav). 11 ran. ½l, 17½l. B Haslam.
4.45 (5f) 1, **Ellie's De Vega** (Cam Hardie, 3-1 fav); 2, Let's Go Hugo (3-1 fav); 3, Lady Bouquet (12-1). 9 ran. nk, 1½l. P A Kirby.
5.15 (1m 5yd) 1, **Sassy Glory** (Rhys Elliott, 13-2); 2, Book Of Life (9-4 fav); 3, Hear The Drums (9-2). 10 ran. 1¼l, 5½l. M Walford.
5.45 (1m 5yd) 1, **Walk On Walk On** (Ryan Sexton, 10-1); 2, Barleybrown (2-1 fav); 3, Here Comes Louie (9-2). 9 ran. ¾l, nk. P A Kirby.
Placepot: £43.90 Quadpot: £19.40

Mike Atherton

Cricket Journalist of the Year

STU FORSTER/GETTY IMAGES

Mid-series purge only makes things worse for Pakistan

England's visitors for the Test summer could hardly stand in greater contrast. New Zealand, with a tiny, rugby-mad population and minimal financial clout, compete valiantly and maximise resources. Pakistan, with a huge, cricket-mad population, sit bottom of the World Test Championship — which is where they finished in the previous cycle — and are a laughing stock at present, as Aaqib Javed, the director of high performance, in a remarkable broadside, admitted.

The fallout from Pakistan's series defeat at Lord's has topped anything that England have brought on themselves this summer, culminating in Aaqib's comments to a Pakistan news channel this week. In defending the decision to send seven players home, he reportedly said: "Someone had to take action. The world is laughing at us because we can't even compete. The message we're sending to the recalled players is that you have to raise your game on important tours and compete and we should be able to see some effort."

At the start of the summer, I argued that the Kiwis were the perfect opponents for an England team at the start of a reset. Given the consistency and excellence of their cricket, they were guaranteed to provide a sound litmus test of any progression. Pakistan, likewise, have proved to be the ideal opponents (for England, rather than for spectators, mind) for this peculiar moment in time, guaranteed to put the home team's chaos into perspective.

England went into the series in crisis, with a new-old captain, an interim coach and, after Lord's, a player photographed briefly in handcuffs in the early hours. Before the series is done, Pakistan have helpfully drawn attention from that with two dire performances and now a decision to send home seven players, as well as the head coach and the bowling coach, replacing the latter with their white-ball counterparts. It is, as far as I can recall, an unprecedented move.

Teams have had upheaval mid-series before, of course. In the 1989 Ashes, England used 29 players across six Tests, a churn that was only partly necessitated by results, after the announcement of a rebel tour to South Africa mid-summer. Likewise, when West Indies players signed to Kerry Packer's World Series, wholesale changes mid-tour were necessary. Maybe the closest to this in recent times was when Australia suspended four players in India in 2013, the so-called homework-gate saga.

I cannot think of an analogous situation, though, where almost half a squad has been sent home, as well as the coaching staff, with blunt criticisms from officialdom ringing in their ears. As well as the obvious logistical challenges — the unusual ten-day break before the Edgbaston Test will ease those concerns, one imagines — there is the cost implication and, most importantly, the signal it sends that those in charge don't know what they are doing. To change a player or two is one thing, but seven?

To analyse all the changes would be futile. Mostly, the called-up players are little known to an English audience. Five are uncapped; the other two have a handful of Test caps between them, though one of them, Saim Ayub, has played just two first-class games since his last Test in January 2025. Two of those sent home have not even played in this series; sent home without a chance to prove themselves.

As a way of pinpointing the ridiculousness of it all, take Ali Usman, the left-arm spinner. Debuting in July in the Caribbean, he was long in the tooth at 33 years old (though spinners tend to mature later), but in four Tests he has done well. He has taken a dozen wickets, including six wickets in a win at Port of Spain, and a maiden five-for at Leeds, where he became the first overseas spinner to do that at the ground since Ashley Mallett more than 50 years ago. He also took six wickets in Pakistan's warm-up match at Beckenham.

If the selectors are worried about his batting and the balance of the side, that much should have been obvious before he was picked on a tour where seam bowling would dominate. Then there is Mohammad Rizwan, who has kept excellently (while struggling with the bat, like most batsmen in this series) and Salman Ali Agha, who has gone from stand-in captain, to sub, to being sent home. What a mess.

Drastic upheaval can work, occasionally. It did so when England last toured Pakistan. After Harry Brook and Joe Root scored a mountain of runs in the opening win in Multan, Pakistan's selectors ordered a drastic change of strategy to play on used, spinning pitches. They won the next two Tests comfortably. But veering from one extreme to another is no way to build lasting success and no way to get the most out of players who must wonder what is happening from day to day.

Imam, lying prostrate after dropping a catch off Root at Lord's, main, is one of the seven players sent home by Pakistan, who evidently lack the steadiness that Misbah, below, brought as captain in 2016

This upheaval has become the norm recently in Pakistan cricket, and it starts at the top. Osman Samiuddin, a fair-minded observer, called the past few years "the worst administrative period in Pakistan's history". That's saying something and his take came before the sackings were announced midweek. There is little reason to doubt him.

Jensen Huang, the chief executive of Nvidia, once said that he liked a touch of paranoia in his company, that he liked "to live in that state where we are about to perish". But athletes deal with enough day-to-day pressure: the scoreboard doesn't lie, and they are judged relentlessly in the media and by the public. What they crave off the field, therefore, is a little certainty, consistency and calm. But instability seems inherent right now. Since Ehsan Mani stood down in August 2021, there have been four chairmen of the Pakistan Cricket Board — a post held at present by a high-profile politician, Mohsin Naqvi. The first-class competition has changed almost season upon season lately, from a bloated number of teams, to a streamlined structure, and, now, back again. Test teams are built on a solid foundations, not ones that change like sands in the tide.

There have been multiple chief selectors since 2020. Between the red-ball and white-ball teams there have been numerous head coaches in that time frame, sometimes from overseas, sometimes not. The latest selector to stand down is Misbah-ul-Haq, captain of the tour here in 2016, when Pakistan topped the Test rankings that summer. If there was anything that characterised Misbah's period as captain it was a certain dour steadiness. How supporters must wish for that now.

Given the present chaos and uncertainty, no wonder talent is being squandered. If anything, though, the mid-series purge is likely to have the opposite effect from what was intended. It was designed, it seems, to put the focus on the players and their performance but what it has done, and will continue to do, is shift attention to the broader administration of Pakistan cricket. Some good may come from that eventually, though not in the way those who dumped on the players intended.

'He should've tried and fought' – Imam faces inquiry over injury

Elizabeth Ammon

Imam-ul-Haq will be subject to disciplinary proceedings by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) which has suggested that he should have tried to take part in the Lord's Test despite his injury.

Imam suffered a calf tear early in the 194-run loss but is set to have action taken against him by his governing body, according to its director of high performance, Aaqib Javed, who is also on the selection panel. Aaqib said in an interview with Pakistan's television network Geo that Imam should have tried to bat in the match. "The Imam injury is a big question mark and a deep disappointment. Players in the past used to get injuries but used to put on casts and still tried. We'll take action against this. How is it possible that a pulled muscle ruled you out of batting in both innings? He should have tried and fought. He'll have to face an inquiry. I can't say he faked it but a muscle pull like that cannot stop you from batting altogether."

Shortly before play on the second morning of the match, Pakistan issued a statement saying that the 30-year-old nephew of Inzamam-ul-Haq had suffered a tear in his left calf. Two days later, having not batted in the first innings, Imam was seen warming up alongside his team-mates but was criticised by Stuart Broad on Sky Sports who said it was "all for show". Imam did not bat in the second innings either, with Shan Masood taking his place as opener.

Imam is one of seven players who have been dropped and sent home by the PCB, who also sacked head coach Sarfaraz Ahmed and assistant coach Umar Gul after the defeat at Lord's. They have called up seven new players to their squad for the final Test at Edgbaston next week including five uncapped players.

"Two Test matches have come and gone and the team has not competed in any way," Aaqib said. He implied that he thought the head coach and the captain, Babar Azam, had picked the wrong team. "They had a pace all-rounder available, a second wicketkeeper, a fast bowler in Ubaid Shah, but those decisions were not being made."

The newly selected players have arrived in England and the stand-in head coach, Mike Hesson, who is Pakistan's white-ball coach, has joined up with the squad ahead of the third Test, which starts at Edgbaston next Wednesday.

England have named a 15-man squad for the final Test with pace bowler Sonny Baker retained, Matthew Fisher dropped and Brydon Carse omitted, having been removed from the squad before the second Test pending investigations into a late-night incident in Derby town centre 11 days ago.

Jones joy but worst slam loss for Boulter

Tom Kershaw
Tennis Correspondent, New York

YUKI IWAMURA/AP

Boulter's game fell apart during the second set against the Wimbledon runner-up. She has won only two grand-slam matches this year, her worst season in six years

The volatile peaks and troughs of British tennis were on full display as Francesca Jones claimed the second grand-slam win of her career to reach the second round of the US Open — less than an hour after Katie Boulter suffered her worst-ever loss at a major.

Jones, who is playing the main draw in New York for the first time, had led Polish veteran Magda Linette by a set when rain suspended play late on Tuesday. That break allowed Linette, a former quarter-finalist here, to reset overnight and she came out firing on all cylinders after yet another rain delay and dominated the second set.

The momentum was firmly against Jones, who has overcome numerous health issues related to the rare condition that means she has only three fingers and a thumb on each hand and seven toes in total, but she demonstrated her tenacity yet again to grind out a 6-4 1-6 6-3 win — albeit not without a moment of controversy at the death. The umpire ruled that the ball had bounced twice on Jones's side during the final game when she was playing a shot at full stretch. After a video review, a let was called, but Linette was furious as she would surely have won the point if not for the needless intervention.

"I was probably a little bit lucky; I am going to say I would have backed myself to close it out," said Jones, who grew up near Bradford. "It did go in my favour. I have never had that before. I didn't realise they had [video review]. They did tell us before the match but you don't really listen. Really grateful I managed to pull through. She came out all guns blazing, it was incredible how she was playing. Hats off to her. I tried to show my Northern grit, stick in there and show what I can do."

Boulter struck a markedly different tone after a bruising 6-1 6-0 defeat bu Karolina Muchova. The British No1 was confronting July's Wimbledon finalist, but the result amounted to an evisceration. It was over in just 58 minutes and, while credit should go to the sublime Muchova, the grim statistics made plain quite how uncompetitive a match it was. Boulter only won three points on her serve in the first set and hit just four winners to 22 unforced errors in total. Eight double-faults added to the general sense of malaise, and Muchova was ruthless as Boulter's game deteriorated badly under the roof on the unfamiliar surrounds of Louis Armstrong Stadium following a late change of court due to the rain.

Boulter enjoyed a fantastic start to the season and picked up her fourth WTA title, but the defeat condemned her to her worst grand-slam season in six years. First-round exits at the Australian Open and Wimbledon came either side of a close-fought victory over American teenage wild card Akasha Urhobo at the French Open. She had another kind draw in New York against American wild card Carol Young Suh Lee, but required three sets to win.

"She was better than me, for sure," Boulter said. "I am probably struggling to be kind to myself but I will [be]. I struggled with the conditions. I struggled with the roof, the noise, I let things distract me.

"I have to learn from the situation. I am not entirely sure what that looks like. Maybe I'll find time in future to get on court with the roof closed and get used to it.

"I let [the noise] get to me. I'm not usually aware of everything going on. It made me feel a little bit uncomfortable. I have to deal with it better. I had expected the crowd to be silent."

Boulter has now lost six of her past eight matches, but she was not alone in heading for the exit. Arthur Fery, Cameron Norrie and Harry Wendelken had already been defeated before she took to the court on Wednesday, and Jan Choinski joined them in relatively swift fashion after suffering a 6-3 6-17-6 (7-5) loss to the Netherlands' Botic van de Zandschulp.

Choinski, the world No 76, has been one of the lesser-celebrated success stories of British tennis this season, perhaps because he only switched his allegiance from Germany in 2019, but he was too one-dimensional to take Van de Zandschulp out of his rhythm.

"I am not someone who changes his whole game during a match. I follow one clear path. The guy played better tennis than me and I think he deserved to win," Choinski bluntly said.

Jones recovered from losing the second set for her first US Open win

Norris sets up junior team to help remove F1 'financial barriers'

Formula One

Molly Hudson
Formula One Correspondent

Lando Norris has launched his own junior race team and a driver development programme as the world champion attempts to help make Formula 1 more accessible for those from all backgrounds.

Motorsport is an incredibly expensive career, with several Formula 1 drivers speaking out in recent months to question whether it is even possible to reach the upper echelons without coming from a wealthy background.

Norris, who became the 11th British world champion when he won the title last year, would himself admit that he was in a privileged position as a youngster. His father, Adam, was in the 2022 Sunday Times Rich List, with a fortune put at £200 million, largely derived from the Hargreaves Lansdown financial services business, where he built the pensions arm before leaving in 2008.

It meant that Norris, 26, could enjoy extra testing, and even had whole circuits booked out for him. Now he wants to give back to the next generation and is investing some of his own money to do so.

"I've been really lucky to have some amazing people around me throughout my career, and I know that getting to Formula 1 takes so much more than just talent," Norris said. "You need the right people around you, the right support and the right opportunities at the right time.

"LN4 Fusion is about building a race team that can compete with the best in junior motorsport, with great people and a great environment for drivers to develop. The LN4 Legacy Programme is about helping talented young drivers get opportunities they might not otherwise have."

The team, called LN4 Fusion, is co-founded by Norris, and developed by an investment group led by Dan Richards. It expects to compete in Italian F4, FRECA, and FIA Formula 3 next year (having acquired select assets from AIX Racing), and has applied to compete in Formula 2 in the future.

The aim of the development programme, which Norris is funding himself in conjunction with partners such as Monster, the energy drink company which is a personal sponsor, is to "remove financial barriers" for drivers at a younger age group, giving them the kind of coaching and career support that Norris benefited from. It is impossible to judge exactly how much that level of support will be worth — but it is significant given that even a season in F3 costs upwards of £1 million.

Meanwhile, Isack Hadjar will miss a second grand prix in his recovery from a wrist injury suffered while boxing training during the summer break. In Monza this weekend, Liam Lawson will continue as Max Verstappen's Red Bull team-mate, while Yuki Tsunoda pairs with Arvid Lindblad for Racing Bulls. It is another chance for Tsunoda to impress as he looks for a race seat in 2027, having narrowly missed out on the points in Zandvoort, which was his first attempt at driving this season's cars.

Red Bull say they are "closely monitoring" Hadjar's rehabilitation and will take no unnecessary risks with his return.

Left: Norris with his father Adam, who built a £200 million fortune from a career in financial services. He revealed the car livery of his junior team yesterday

Sport Rugby union

Itoje: Sabbaticals like mine could prolong an England career

Will Kelleher
Deputy Rugby Correspondent

Maro Itoje believes the RFU should allow players to take sabbaticals to prolong their careers, having had his first full summer break for 12 years.

Itoje, 31, was rested for England's Nations Championship Tests in July against South Africa, Fiji and Argentina, having had the highest playing load of any international over the past decade.

Through winning more than 100 caps and appearing on three British & Irish Lions tours, the England captain was never afforded a long break. He thinks his last full pre-season at Saracens came in 2014, when he was 20 years old.

The prospect of him missing the summer Tests was raised by the England head coach, Steve Borthwick, after the Six Nations. Itoje said he was surprised at the suggestion, but is delighted that he agreed to it.

He would now back the introduction of formal sabbaticals for England players — akin to those that All Blacks players enjoy, where they miss a season of Tests, or join a club in Japan where the season load is far lighter.

Asked if he thinks that approach could work in England, Itoje said: "I think so. In many ways it is a huge blessing, since I have been involved with England in pretty much every campaign and with Saracens, for a large period of that time when we were a top team in Europe so we were going deep into Europe, deep in the Prem, and that has also helped with Lions tours and selections, so I have been very fortunate.

"But the cost of that is that you don't tend to have a break, or the breaks that you do have are very short. The internationals now have had their five or six weeks off depending on the player and the club, then they come back and in three to four weeks a lot of them will be playing the first Prem game. That is a three or four-week pre-season.

"These guys are expected, probably rightly so, to be the top performers, so in order to come back in the shape required to help your team progress you need to train during your off-season. Then the intended purpose of your off-season then changes and turns into a little mini-camp before you get into your season. It essentially removes the rest from the off-season — so I do think breaks like this are necessary and helpful.

"The other way to get around it is being injured. If you are injured you get those mental breaks and mental rest, but it comes at the cost of your injury. Where I have been fortunate this time around is I have had a break but physically I am healthy, so I have been able to rest then have a full pre-season more or less to work on myself and my body and be around the team, and that has been a good thing.

"I was taken aback initially because it just never entered my mind. It was never something that I thought was an option, but I kind of had in my mind, 'This is the way the cookie crumbles and you just have to power through.' The more time that went by, I was like, 'OK, I do think this is the right thing to do.' "

Itoje chose not to watch the England Tests live, to switch off properly, but kept in touch with the team periodically. He fortuitously bumped into the England squad at Heathrow when he returned from a trip to Nigeria, at the same time as Borthwick's men had landed back from South Africa.

"That was a massive coincidence," said Itoje, who also travelled to Mauritius. "There's been some light touches. I kept in touch, wishing the boys luck and stuff. But I also know how it is when you're in camp and going through it, so I didn't want to be too much in their grill. "I watched [the games] back in retrospect, partly because I wanted to remove some of the emotion from watching it. That's the beauty of sport — when you watch a game live, you're in every nook and cranny, every tackle.

"That also probably has a hidden emotional kind of weight. The whole purpose of the rest was to get back on the even keel, so that was my methodology.

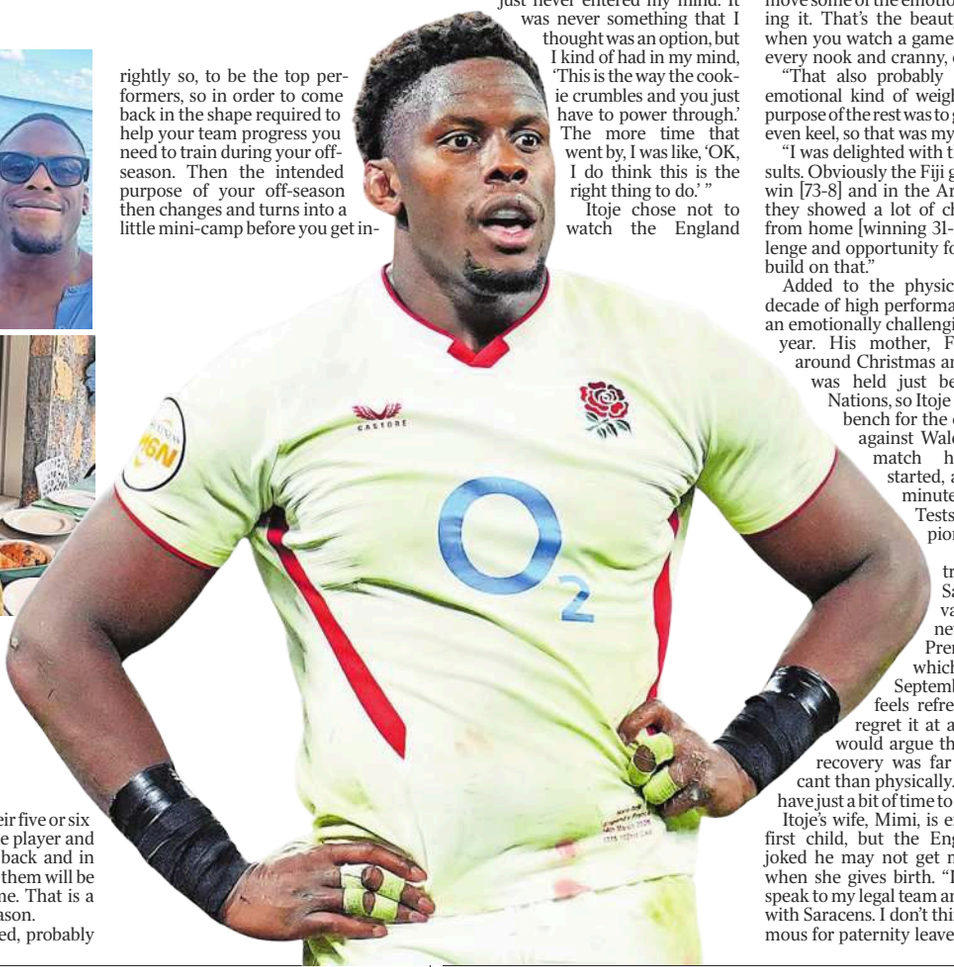
"I was delighted with the last two results. Obviously the Fiji game was a big win [73-8] and in the Argentina game they showed a lot of character away from home [winning 31-24]. The challenge and opportunity for us now is to build on that."

Added to the physical toll of his decade of high performance, Itoje had an emotionally challenging season last year. His mother, Florence, died around Christmas and her funeral was held just before the Six Nations, so Itoje only made the bench for the opening game against Wales — the first match he had not started, and played 80 minutes of, for 30 Tests in that championship.

Now back training with Saracens in advance of the new Gallagher Prem season, which begins on September 25, Itoje feels refreshed. "I don't regret it at all," he said. "I would argue that the mental recovery was far more significant than physically. It was nice to have just a bit of time to take a breath."

Itoje's wife, Mimi, is expecting their first child, but the England captain joked he may not get much time off when she gives birth. "I may have to speak to my legal team and get in touch with Saracens. I don't think rugby is famous for paternity leave," he quipped.

Itoje posted photos of his time in Mauritius, above, having visited there and Nigeria after being given a rest from international duty



Warren demands Itauma makes changes after defeat

Boxing
Declan Warrington

Frank Warren plans to meet Moses Itauma and his team to demand changes after the Briton's shock defeat by Filip Hrgovic.

The 21-year-old, widely recognised as the world's most talented young heavyweight, unexpectedly lost for the first time on Saturday when being stopped in the ninth round of the fight with Hrgovic for the IBF title.

Itauma's trainer, Ben Davison, has since been intensely criticised for a perception that Itauma, who tired after building a convincing lead, was underprepared. Davison was similarly criticised in May for not rescuing Fabio Wardley earlier in his defeat by Daniel Dubois. However, he was praised for recognising the endurance of Tyson Fury during their time together.

Warren, though, who continues to work with Fury and Itauma, wants the young fighter to make changes.

Also prominent in the team is Warren's son Francis, who is Itauma's manager. The promoter revealed that he hadn't wanted Itauma to be matched with Hrgovic, but cited the examples of Wladimir Klitschko and Joe Louis when insisting that he can rebuild.

"I've got my views, and when I sit down with [Itauma], I'll tell him where I'm at and what I expect to happen," he said. "I think he'll learn from it. I've spoken to him quite a few times.

"There's certain things that I've seen in the fight and see on the night that obviously have got to be dealt with. You have to manage a fight. He got in the ring, just went and put his foot on the accelerator and pushed it into overdrive and never took it off. He never went back to the jab; moved around; took it easy. On all the [score]cards, all he had to do was box. He's got the speed — he could have done that.

"It's about the management of a fight. 'I'm in a 12-round fight. That's what I'm trained for.' [But] he was determined to stop it. His brother [Karol] was sitting next to me. He said, 'He won't feel he's won the title unless he knocks him out.' I said, 'What a load of bollocks that is.'

"I was disappointed because, first of all, I was looking to make a different opponent. We were talking about it and they said, 'That's the opponent.' "

Dubois continued rebuilding from his first loss — to Oleksandr Usyk — when in 2024 he stopped Hrgovic, 34, inflicting the Croatian's only defeat. On October 17 he defends his WBO title against Wardley. Their rematch will be at London's O2 Arena, where Itauma-Hrgovic was staged.

"[Itauma] was in with a real good fighter," Dubois said. "He'll be back. Hrgovic, man, is a tough guy."

Warren was also asked about the latest delay in negotiations for an overdue fight between Fury and Anthony Joshua, which is expected to be held in New York, and he responded: "Joshua's not signed yet. Tyson's signed. He don't care. They want it in New York; they want it in Barbados; they want it on the Isle of Wight ... he's signed."

Itauma was stopped by Hrgovic after running out of steam

Northampton won't break bank to pay Pollock £1m Hearn wants

Will Kelleher

Northampton Saints have vowed not to break the bank to keep Henry Pollock, who should be earning £1 million a year, according to his agent, Eddie Hearn.

However, the England back-row forward is still likely to stay at his boyhood club. Pollock is out of contract at the end of the new season, and Hearn is pushing for him to receive a bumper pay rise.

Pollock earns about £150,000 a year at Saints, topped up by an England central contract worth about the same figure. Northampton cannot spend above the Prem's £6.4 million salary cap, so cannot commit £1million to Pollock's wages.

Asked about Pollock's contract talks, his director of rugby, Phil Dowson, said: "The appetite is for him to stay. We've got to find a happy medium. We really want to keep him, he really wants to stay, and that's a great start. My job is to try and fit 57, 58 players within a squad on a budget. I'll continue to do that."

The Saints fly half Fin Smith joked: "I think he's worth it! He told me to say that. It is hard to put a value on a player like that. You probably can't answer what he does for shirt sales and putting bums on seats, but hopefully he doesn't get a million. I would be a bit annoyed about that!"

Pollock earns £150,000 at Saints, who have a salary cap of £6.4million

Burnley salvage point as they adapt to life without Flemming

Burnley *Raghouber 54*	**1**
Middlesbrough *Morris 23*	**1**

Mike Whalley

Ugo Raghouber's first Burnley goal gave a much-needed lift to a club who have been facing setbacks wherever they have turned in their struggle to adjust to the Championship.

Life is tough at Turf Moor right now. A club that rarely looked like avoiding relegation from the Premier League last season has found life no easier at the lower level. Burnley have not won a home league match in more than 10 months, and their attacking threat has been blunted by the sale to Ipswich Town on transfer deadline day of Zian Flemming, last season's leading scorer.

A third defeat in their opening four league matches looked likely when Aidan Morris swept in a stylish first-half goal for Middlesbrough, having been set up by Sebastian Berhalter.

Berhalter almost added a second before half-time with a fierce 25-yard shot that struck the post. Burnley, feeble for most of the opening 45 minutes, were booed off at the break, and there was little indication that they would turn the match around.

They ultimately salvaged it, thanks to a much improved second-half display. Raghouber, the French midfielder signed from Lille in July, equalised nine minutes into the second half when he took Zeki Amdouni's pass 40 yards from goal and was allowed to stride unchallenged to the edge of the penalty area before steering a shot into the net.

Burnley could have gone on to win from there. Dastan Satpayev forced a wrong-footed Radek Vitek to save with his trailing leg after twisting past Alfie Jones on a run into the area. Aaron Ramsey, on as a second-half substitute, drove a shot narrowly wide inside the final 15 minutes. Middlesbrough were left to regret not making more of their first-half superiority.

For once, it was not Will Lankshear's night. The forward, signed for an initial £10 million from Tottenham Hotspur in July, had scored six times in his opening five matches. A promising start for him fizzled out.

Burnley may have been behind as early as the third minute, when Lankshear sprinted on to a long pass from Vitek and got in behind a ball-watching Hjalmar Ekdal but bundled the ball wide as Max Weiss came out to close him off. Vitek made a solid save when Satpayev exchanged passes with Amdouni and recovered after almost losing his footing to shoot from the edge of the penalty area.

Burnley's first-half performance, however, lacked verve. Lankshear headed wide in the closing minutes of the half, then slipped Anel Ahmedhodzic easily to deliver a low cross that Riley McGree turned wide on the stretch from six yards. At that stage, it was impossible to see how Burnley would get anything from the match at all. Raghouber ensured that they did.

Raghouber's strike secured Burnley a draw

Results

Football

Championship

Burnley	(0)	**1**	**Middlesbrough**	(1) **1**
Raghouber 54			Morris 23	
Millwall	(0)	**0**	**Wrexham**	(1) **3**
			Sturge (og) 28 Moore 52, Ekomié 69	
QPR	(1)	**2**	**Cardiff**	(0) **1**
Burrell 36, 53			Ng 74 15,027	
West Brom	(0)	**1**	**Charlton**	(0) **1**
Styles 59			Campbell 69	

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Swansea	4	3	1	0	7	1	6	**10**
QPR	4	3	1	0	7	3	4	**10**
Charlton	4	3	1	0	6	3	3	**10**
Wolves	4	2	1	1	11	8	3	**7**
Middlesbrough	4	2	1	1	7	5	2	**7**
Bristol City	4	2	1	1	7	6	1	**7**
West Bromwich	4	2	1	1	7	6	1	**7**
Birmingham	4	1	3	0	5	4	1	**6**
Sheffield United	4	1	3	0	5	4	1	**6**
Millwall	4	2	0	2	6	8	-2	**6**
Wrexham	4	1	2	1	6	4	2	**5**
West Ham	4	1	2	1	8	7	1	**5**
Blackburn	4	1	2	1	5	5	0	**5**
Watford	4	1	2	1	4	5	-1	**5**
Bolton	4	1	1	2	4	5	-1	**4**
Derby	4	1	1	2	5	7	-2	**4**
Lincoln City	4	1	1	2	3	5	-2	**4**
Southampton*	4	2	1	1	10	5	5	**3**
Cardiff	4	0	3	1	6	7	-1	**3**
Norwich	4	1	0	3	5	7	-2	**3**
Portsmouth	4	1	0	3	5	8	-3	**3**
Stoke	4	1	0	3	4	9	-5	**3**
Burnley	4	0	2	2	5	10	-5	**2**
Preston	4	0	0	4	3	9	-6	**0**

*deducted 4pts for breaching league rules

League One

Barnsley	(0)	**2**	**Blackpool**	(0) **1**
McGeehan 61 Richards 87			Bowler 65	
Burton	(2)	**4**	**AFC Wimbledon**	(1) **1**
Evans 28 Smith (og) 34 Webster 46 Vickers 76			Stockley 18 2,733	
Luton	(0)	**2**	**Stockport**	(0) **0**
Wells 50 Marshall 76			10,013	
Reading	(3)	**5**	**Mansfield**	(0) **0**
Marriott 35, 58 Ward 40, Earthy 44 Brown 80			9,607	
Wigan	(1)	**3**	**MK Dons**	(0) **1**
Weir 36, 74 Power 48			Collins 81	

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Huddersfield	4	3	1	0	9	3	6	**10**
Sheffield Wed	4	3	0	1	11	5	6	**9**
Blackpool	4	2	1	1	8	4	4	**7**
Burton	4	2	1	1	8	5	3	**7**
Barnsley	4	2	1	1	5	3	2	**7**
Cambridge	4	2	1	1	7	6	1	**7**
Luton	4	2	1	1	10	10	0	**7**
Leyton Orient	4	2	0	2	9	5	4	**6**
Stockport County	4	2	0	2	9	6	3	**6**
Notts County	4	1	3	0	6	5	1	**6**
Bradford	4	2	0	2	4	4	0	**6**
Mansfield	4	2	0	2	8	10	-2	**6**
Leicester	4	1	2	1	4	3	1	**5**
Reading	3	1	1	1	8	4	4	**4**
Oxford United	3	1	1	1	5	6	-1	**4**
Plymouth	4	1	1	2	4	6	-2	**4**
AFC Wimbledon	4	1	1	2	2	7	-5	**4**
Peterborough	4	1	1	2	2	7	-5	**4**
Bromley	4	1	1	2	4	13	-9	**4**
Doncaster	4	0	3	1	4	5	-1	**3**
Stevenage	4	0	3	1	4	5	-1	**3**
Wigan	4	1	0	3	5	7	-2	**3**
Milton Keynes Dons	4	0	3	1	4	6	-2	**3**
Wycombe	4	0	2	2	4	9	-5	**2**

Scottish Premiership

Celtic	(3)	**3**	**Aberdeen**	(0) **0**
Durán 14, Nygren 34 Yang 45+1				
Dundee	(0)	**1**	**St Johnstone**	(0) **1**
Reilly 87			Fowler 90 6,104	
Falkirk	(1)	**1**	**Rangers**	(1) **2**
Nedeljkovic (og) 44			Shankland 8, 79 6,847	
Kilmarnock	(0)	**0**	**St Mirren**	(1) **1**
5,024			Taylor 4	
Motherwell	(1)	**3**	**Dundee United**	(0) **0**
Palmer-Houlden 19 Lowry 65, Levitt 67 Sent off: E Agyei (Dundee United) 14				

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Celtic	4	4	0	0	11	2	9	**12**
St Mirren	4	3	1	0	7	3	4	**10**
Motherwell	4	2	2	0	8	4	4	**8**
Dundee	5	2	1	2	6	4	2	**7**
Rangers	4	2	1	1	5	4	1	**7**
Hearts	3	2	0	1	7	3	4	**6**
Hibernian	3	2	0	1	5	4	1	**6**
St Johnstone	4	1	1	2	6	7	-1	**4**
Dundee United	5	1	1	3	5	10	-5	**4**
Aberdeen	4	1	0	3	2	7	-5	**3**
Falkirk	4	0	1	3	2	6	-4	**1**
Kilmarnock	4	0	0	4	4	14	-10	**0**

Women's Champions League third qualifying round second leg Real Sociedad 0 Chelsea 1 (Chelsea win 6-2 on aggregate).

Cycling

Vuelta a España

Leading positions: Stage 11 (Cartagena to Lorca, 151.3km): **1** M Brennan (GB; Visma — Lease a Bike) 3hr 17min 18sec; **2** B Coquard (Fr; Cofidis); **3** J Meeus (Bel; Red Bull — Bora — Hansgrohe); **4** M Cort (Den; Uno-X Mobility); **5** W van Aert (Bel; Visma — Lease a Bike) all same time. **Overall: 1** E Mas (Sp; Movistar) 35hr 59min 02sec; **2** P Roglic (Slovak; Red Bull — Bora — Hansgrohe) +1:18; **3** F Gall (Aut; Decathlon CMA CGM) +1:39; **4** O Onley (GB; Netcompany Ineos) +2:20; **5** R Carapaz (Ecu; EF Education — EasyPost) +3:26.

Tour of Britain

Leading positions: Stage 1 (Lincoln to Lincoln, (182.5km): **1** L Askey (GB; NSN Team) 4hr 2min 44sec; **2** F Ganna (It; Netcompany Ineos Cycling) +2sec; **3** T Wellens (Bel; UAE Emirates-XRG) same time; **4** J Stuyven (Bel; Soudal Quick-Step) +9sec; **5** D Hoole (Neth; Decathlon CMA CGM) same time. **Overall: 1** Askey 4hr 2min 31sec; **2** Ganna +9sec; **3** Wellens +11sec; **4** Hoole +20sec; **5** M Trentin (It; Tudor Pro Cycling) +21sec.

Snooker

British Open

Centaur, Cheltenham: First round (England unless stated): S Moody bt P Yao (China) 4-1; F Zhengyi (China) bt M Stevens (Wales) 4-3; M Selby bt L Peifan (China) 4-3; L Zehuang (China) bt A Carthy 4-2; R Muir (Scot) bt B Yulu (China) 4-3; Z Wang (China) bt Jamie Jones (Wales) 4-3; J Trump bt R Walden 4-2, D Gilbert bt S Murphy 4-2; A Hill (Ire) bt B Mertens (Bel) 4-2; D Grace bt Z Surety 4-1; Z Xintong (China) bt D Wells (Wales) 4-2; J Higgins (Scot) bt Z Saengkham (Thai) 4-3.

Tennis

US Open

Flushing Meadows (seeds in brackets; **British players in blue**): **Men: First round** (1) A Zverev (Ger) bt L Sonego (It) 6-4, 3-6, 6-7(9), 7-5, 6-4; G Monfils (Fr) bt A Vallejo (Par) 2-6, 6-1, 6-2, 6-0; B van de Zandschulp (Neth) bt **J Choinski (GB)** 6-3, 6-1, 7-6(5); B Bonzi (Fr) bt A Molcan (Slovak) 6-4, 3-6, 6-3, 6-2. **Second round** A Michelsen (US) bt (16) B Nakashima (US) 6-3, 6-4, 6-4; (7) D Medvedev (Russ) bt S Gorzny (US) 6-1, 6-3, 7-5; D Merida (Sp) bt (23) A Rublev (Russ) 6-7(3), 6-2, 6-2, 6-4; (26) A Rinderknech (Fr) bt J Munar (Sp) 7-6(4), 6-2, 7-5; (8) B Shelton bt H Hurkacz (Pol) 6-3, 5-7, 7-6(3), 7-5.

Women: First round (4) C Gauff (US) bt Z Sonmez (Tur) 6-3, 6-4; (17) A Eala (Fil) bt M Stoiana (US) 6-1, 6-2; P Badosa (Sp) bt D Kasatkina (Aus) 6-1, 6-4; N Bartunkova (Cz Rep) bt M Sherif (Egypt) 6-1, 6-2. **Second round** (19) J Paolini (It) bt L Stefanini (It) 6-4, 6-1; (31) L Fernandez (Can) bt M Sawangkaew (Thai) 6-4, 6-1; T Townsend (US) bt T Preston (Aus) 6-1, 6-1; (3) J Pegula (US) bt S Kenin (US) 6-3, 6-1; (15) D Shnaider (Russ) bt K Pliskova (Cz Rep) 6-1, 7-6(4); (16) S Cirstea (Rom) bt D Parry (Fr) 6-2, 7-5; (11) M Kostyuk (Ukr) bt S Stephens (US) 6-1, 7-5; (7) K Muchova (Cz Rep) bt **K Boulter (GB)** 6-1, 6-0.

Fixtures

Football

Scottish Premiership Hibernian v Hearts (7.45).

Cricket

County Championship: Second day of four (11.0): **Division One: Chelmsford** Essex v Sussex. **Utilita Bowl** Hampshire v Warwickshire. **Trent Bridge** Nottinghamshire v Leicestershire. **Taunton** Somerset v Glamorgan. **The Oval** Surrey v Yorkshire. **Division Two: Bristol** Gloucestershire v Derbyshire. **Canterbury** Kent v Worcestershire. **Northwood** Middlesex v Lancashire. **Northampton** Northamptonshire v Durham. **Second Women's One Day International:** (1.0): **Derby** England v Ireland.

Cycling

Tour of Britain: Day Two (Boston to Skegness; 180.2km).

Rugby league

Super League Bradford v Castleford (8.0).

Snooker

Centaur, Cheltenham British Open.

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Sport

Matthew Syed

TOM BARTON/MANCHESTER CITY FC

City charges saga is casting shadow over the top flight

In about 2064, after AI has taken over and Elon Musk's kids are ruling Mars, we will probably get a verdict on whether the Manchester City humanoid team of the early 21st century — with all their trophies and huge transfers (including in this window, described by insiders as a "triumph") — was built on a pack of lies. I always thought Dickens' Jarndyce v Jarndyce would have the last word on the mockery made of natural justice by procedural minutiae and delays but this saga takes Dickens' finest satire to the cleaners.

It's funny but when Everton and Nottingham Forest were found to have made relatively straightforward breaches of Profitability and Sustainability rules, they were instantly whacked with fines and point deductions. The process was put on an expedited timetable so the rules could be rapidly enforced. The timetable for judging the 115 charges against City, on the other hand, seems to be modelled on the Covid inquiry, which started when people were keen to know what caused the pandemic and will conclude — after more "modules" than City have lawyers — when the next pandemic has come and gone, and two new inquiries are in progress.

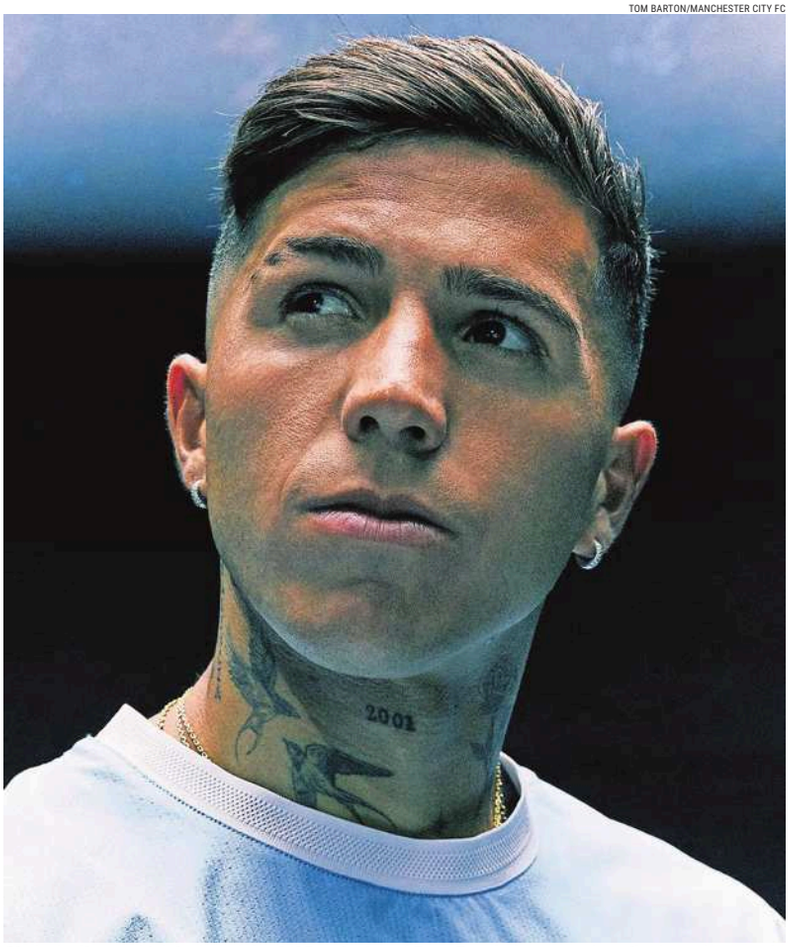
One obvious conclusion from all this is that the law itself is broken. "Justice delayed is justice denied" is an old truism, but cogent nonetheless. It is of course necessary to scrutinise, probe, and offer fair hearing. But is it just me or do you also feel that the legal profession — broadly understood — has every incentive to make such processes as interminable as possible, thereby converting the quest for justice into a gravy train for them? Put it this way: if lawyers, judges and assorted members of tribunals had to pay interest on what they earned for every week of delay to the verdict, justice would, I suggest, be swifter and fairer (and cheaper).

I digress. Let's get back to the footie, because it's worth getting a sense of the cynicism now endemic in the game. I mean, how can anyone describe the Manchester City transfer window as a "success" (as it has been characterised not just by City fans but independent analysts) based on an assessment of the "net spend" or the aggregate consequences for the wage bill (discounted in terms of future cash flow or otherwise), when we all know that the whole thing is a figment of an accountant's imagination? Or could be? Journalists should never fail to offer the important caveat: City firmly deny all allegations.

And this is the real story here, of course: the shadow this saga casts over the whole of the English top flight. I am not just talking about the allegation that City reported inaccurate sponsorship income and payments involving parties linked to the club's owners, or the alleged £1.75 million paid to Roberto Mancini for a "consultancy" agreement with Al Jazira, another club owned by Sheikh Mansour, or even the rest of the multifarious charges of cheating and obfuscation. I am talking about what I hope all neutral observers will concede is undeniable: even though the allegations relate to the period between 2009-10 and 2017-18, they are directly relevant today. It should be said that City have consistently denied any wrongdoing and have previously said they have a "comprehensive body of irrefutable evidence" to support their stance.

Football, like life, is path dependent. It is precisely because a big club that (allegedly) break the rules can build an elite squad faster, get into the Champions League earlier, create a winning core of players with higher resale value, increase "legitimate" commercial value through earlier, fraudulent success, and so on, that reaches into the present day. Everything must come with an asterisk, a question mark, the sense that nothing makes sense until we know what happened. Everything is distorted, skewed, the money flowing through this transfer market potentially tainted, which is the real lesson of the window that has just closed.

You say I protest too much? Not really. One of the striking things about the Chelsea scandal in March was the utter contempt of fans for the puniness of the sanction. Our reporter Martyn Ziegler described the industrial-scale cheating as "jaw-dropping" — and he was correct. How else to characterise secret payments to players, staff and intermediaries totalling £47.5 million between 2011-18? It's true that the payments wouldn't have breached PSR rules, but this is the point. It is precisely because Chelsea cheated when other clubs refused to do so that enabled the club to sign some of the finest players of the era, not least Eden Hazard, handing them momentum extending far beyond the specific breach.



City's dealings, which included the £125m signing of Enzo Fernández, were described as a 'success'

But what happened? Did Chelsea have their titles annulled? Did they have their trophies confiscated? Did people like Bruce Buck, who was chairman of the club throughout this era (and chairman of the Premier League audit and remuneration committee between 2014 and 2021), get hauled up before the FA to explain? Errr. The club didn't even receive a points deduction, just a £10 million slap on the wrist, representing a fraction of the financial upside gained from their chicanery. It was an affront to any conception of fairness or proportionality.

And this, I'm sorry to say, is what the Premier League has become. It is a pulsating league featuring top-class talent, but it is built on the deceit of two-tier justice. One rule for the marquee franchises and another for Small Club United. One rule for those who can afford top lawyers, another for those who can't. If City are found guilty in 2064, it will go to appeal, probably to chatbots sitting in servers in the cloud. And by then of course, nobody will remember the clubs and teams that were shafted, and who were fraudulently denied glory that should have been theirs.

Fernández relishing 'club as big as Manchester City'

Enzo Fernández risked incurring the wrath of Chelsea fans once more by claiming that he had always dreamt of joining "a club as big as Manchester City" (Paul Hirst writes).

The 25-year-old suggested that his £125 million move from Chelsea to City was a step up for him and that he views his new club as a bigger name.

He angered Chelsea fans in March by talking about how he would love to move to Madrid, although Real didn't make a bid for him despite holding an interest. In pre-season, some supporters of Chelsea then booed him after he was linked with a transfer to City, who completed the signing of him on deadline day.

"I'm really happy to be here," the Argentina international said. "I always dreamt of being at a club as big as City. I'm grateful for the opportunity. It's a very emotional moment for me and my family, to take this step in a football career that I always dreamt of. I'm so happy to be here, enjoying these first few hours I've had at the club. I can already see just how big it is. We will enjoy ourselves and win lots together."

During their time together at Chelsea, Enzo Maresca and Fernández became close, and the midfielder said that the Italian was a driving force behind his joint-British record transfer to the Etihad Stadium.

"We were both very eager for it to happen," Fernández said on being reunited with Maresca. "From the first day [City] called me to say they wanted me to join, I didn't hesitate for a second."

Villa ready to give injured Onana new contract

Aston Villa are in talks with Amadou Onana over a contract extension, despite the midfielder being out injured (Charlotte Duncker writes).

The Belgium international is recovering from an anterior cruciate ligament injury he suffered during the World Cup and is expected to miss the majority of this campaign. Unai Emery, however, views the 25-year-old as a key member of his squad, and is ready to reward him with a new deal.

Villa are also in talks with left back Ian Maatsen over fresh terms after rebuffing interest from Manchester United. The 24-year-old has started both of Villa's league games this season after the sale of Lucas Digne to Paris Saint-Germain.

Tottenham ready for Richarlison bid from Trabzonspor

Tottenham Hotspur are preparing to sell the Brazil forward Richarlison if Trabzonspor increase their informal offer (Gary Jacob writes).

Richarlison wants to play alongside the former Liverpool players Mohamed Salah and Fabinho at the Turkish side and personal terms are not expected to be an issue. Tottenham valued him at £35 million in a proposed swap deal involving the winger Iliman Ndiaye, in which Richarlison, 29, would have returned to Everton.

But after the deal collapsed on Monday, he expressed frustration in cryptic social media posts that his future should not be decided by others. The Trabzonspor president Ertugrul Dogan has been holding talks in London but a second informal offer of £20 million was rejected. Tottenham are braced for a formal approach before the transfer window closes for Turkish clubs tomorrow.

Trabzonspor's other option is Pablo, of West Ham. Tottenham signed Omar Marmoush from Manchester City this summer and also count Dominic Solanke as an alternative.

Richarlison entered the final year of his contract but Spurs have the option to extend it by a season. They tried to offload him two summers ago but he rejected a move to Saudi Arabia because he said that his "dreams are bigger" than his desire for a huge salary. He felt a move could have affected his chances of playing for Brazil at the World Cup in 2026, although he never made the squad.

Monaco chief: No war with Chelsea

CONTINUED FROM BACK

DAVE WINTER/FEP/ICON SPORT/GETTY IMAGES

Balogun pulled out of a deadline-day move from Monaco to Everton

was negotiated with appearance-related triggers for additional payments, which were accepted by Monaco. They also said that Balogun's flight for a medical was delayed, and accused Monaco of taking their time to provide appropriate medical records, reducing the amount of time available to resolve the issues.

Scuro said that Monaco, who needed to make a sale to help their financial position with the French regulator the DNCG, had disputed Everton's concerns raised during the medical.

"Around 7pm we were contacted by Everton, raising questions on the medical of Balogun, which for our medical staff, and for the personal medical staff of the player, made totally no sense," he said. "The explanations were not enough to justify or bring concerns of the future of the player. Which there is not.

"This discussion started between medical departments between here and there. It took Everton two to three hours to go deeper on the assessment, to check with other doctors.

"This is a normal situation when the doctor of the club raises concerns. It's quite normal that clubs will look for other specialists, sharing the images and discuss the case. This was ongoing. In the meantime, as everything on the last days, this was in the press quite quickly. I would say around half an hour after we were contacted."

Scuro said Chelsea had been in touch with Monaco for ten days about Camara, and that unlike with Balogun, whom they were open to selling, the club were not keen to sell Camara. They rebuffed another inquiry from Chelsea at 4pm, according to Scuro. It is understood Chelsea had at least one offer, worth £38.5 million, rejected on deadline day.

"It was already in the media that Balogun is failing on the medical, then, of course, Chelsea saw the opportunity," Scuro said. "Monaco needs money. Balogun is struggling there. Let's go. Let's try. This is the game. It's fair to play this game. There is no problem. Chelsea came, called us. Maybe I can be here for the solution. At this moment, we had to open the door for the discussion. This was almost 8pm. We started to open negotiations with Chelsea for Lamine. I informed the player directly. I called him. I informed his agent, as we always do. Very open. We had discussions between the conditions for Lamine to go to Chelsea. At the same time, the medical discussion was ongoing with Balogun.

"What happened was that around 10pm, in our time here, maybe a bit earlier, Everton realised that there is no problem. We are ready to do it. Let's sign the contract. As soon as we got the information, yes, we did go back to Chelsea and said, 'OK, we have our deal there. There is no deal on Lamine.' Because it's also fair to do this. It's also part of the game."

Chelsea were furious, with sources suggesting that the French club's decision to renege on the deal was unprofessional. They were under the impression that the agreement for Camara was not connected to the Balogun situation, and that Monaco's acceptance was unconditional. Scuro defended Monaco. "There is no reason that this kind of discussions are dynamic on the last day of the transfer window, which all of us decided to be on the last day, trying to find solutions, with the clock ticking on our neck, that now this kind of interaction becomes the bad guys in the room," he said. "That Monaco is not fair, Monaco is not right. Everybody is very fair and nice in the football industry, just Monaco is not. Too much."

Scuro said that Camara, who trained with Monaco yesterday, had asked the club to find a solution to make the transfer happen and that he had spoken to the Chelsea manager Xabi Alonso. "I'm very confident that soon he will have even better options and offers than the one he had yesterday," Scuro said. Balogun is still to return to Monaco, and Scuro said they may seek a sale in countries where the transfer window remains open.

"My intention here is, as always, to work for Monaco and protect Monaco," he added. "I don't want to create war with Chelsea. I don't want to create war with Everton."

Everton supporters have reacted with fury to a chaotic deadline day, with their ire directed, chiefly, at the owner The Friedkin Group and the chief executive Angus Kinnear.

By yesterday lunchtime, a petition on the website change.org had received over 1,000 verified signatures, demanding Kinnear's removal from the post. Fans' groups issued a variety of demands, asking for clarity from the American owners over the turmoil of the past month.

The influential 1878 group, who played a prominent role in improving the atmosphere at the Hill Dickinson Stadium, said that they are "standing down for the foreseeable future" and will no longer carry out that role.

"To be clear, this is nothing against the signings we have made. We welcome them to the club and wish them the best of luck here," their statement read. "However, like the rest of our fanbase, we are utterly disappointed and disgusted with how this transfer window has gone, especially the end of it."

The Everton Fans' Forum issued a release demanding more transparency and communication from the club's owners.

"The Fans' Forum believes supporters deserve a clear explanation of what went wrong during this transfer window, why key targets were not secured and what measures will be put in place to ensure these failures are not repeated," its statement read.

Rigid transfer policy leaves United shaky in defence and further behind elite

Charlotte Dunker, Paul Hirst

For the first time since the summer of 2019, Manchester United ended a deadline day without a signing coming through the door.

Supporters may be underwhelmed by the lack of late transfer activity, with a left back not secured, but the club are pleased that they have strengthened their midfield.

With the new hierarchy and recruitment structure keen to right the wrongs of some terrible business in recent years, their strategy changed. Last summer the focus was the forward line, which was swiftly rectified; this year it was the centre of the pitch.

Michael Carrick, the United head coach, is pleased with the additions of Youri Tielemans, Andrey Santos and Carlos Baleba, for a combined outlay of £155 million, with sources happy that the overhaul needed in the middle has been completed. United looked at other targets, most notably Elliot Anderson, who expressed an interest in joining the club, but given his £116 million transfer fee and wage demands, signing the England midfielder would have wiped out United's entire budget.

But what about defence, primarily left back? That was the position — the second priority — that they would have strengthened had the right target become available. Lewis Hall was their first choice but when it became clear that Newcastle United would not sell, they ended their pursuit of the England player.

Rayan Ait-Nouri was presented as a last-minute option but Manchester City, who were happy to loan out the full back, wanted to include an obligation to buy that United were not interested in. They thought he could do a job for them this season but a permanent deal would have affected their plans next summer.

And it will not just be at left back that they look to bolster in a year's time — it will be the back line as a whole. Lisandro Martínez will be in the final year of his deal and Harry Maguire will be 34. Added to that, Matthijs de Ligt has repeatedly struggled with injuries, while there are undoubtedly questions over both Luke Shaw's ability to stay fit and the calibre at right back. For this season, however, the feeling is that they have enough cover at left back without adding a player who is not a priority.

United had hoped to sign another left back, but remain reliant on Shaw's fitness

Patrick Dorgu is seen as a potential replacement, although he has played only on the left wing or as a left wing-back since joining from Lecce for £25million in February 2025. Right backs Noussair Mazraoui and Diogo Dalot can deputise and 19-year-old left back Harry Amass stayed despite interest from a number of clubs. Martínez can also provide cover.

Of course it is not the perfect situation and they could find that strengthening one position at a time leaves them further behind their rivals, but they are also not in the same position to spend as some of those around them, with a lack of sales and amortisation of previous deals restricting their budget.

While the likes of City, Chelsea, Newcastle and Aston Villa have recouped hundreds of millions of pounds in sales, United generated only £93.6million through the exits of Rasmus Højlund, Radek Vitek and Toby Collyer.

Joshua Zirkzee could not be sold after talks with Juventus and Fiorentina over a transfer broke down, and United denied him a loan move to Everton because it was too late in the window. Manuel Ugarte was unsellable after the injury he picked up at the World Cup, while the £325,000-a-week wages of Marcus Rashford had an impact on any wiggle room for further incomings.

Carrick said that the England forward feels felt like a new signing, and United will have to hope he has the impact of one given the knock-on effect of him staying at the club has had.

Slow and blindsided by rivals: Arsenal end the transfer window lacking pace in attack

Champions begin title defence after sporting director Andrea Berta fell short of answering Mikel Arteta's calls for weapons, writes **Gary Jacob**

Arsenal spent the summer targeting superstars to play with more freedom, to dominate domestically and challenge the very best in Europe.

It ended with them largely empty-handed and facing questions over how their sporting director, Andrea Berta, went about trying to land their biggest targets. There is concern that Arsenal will again be too blunt and will need to rely on their defence — as they did last season — if they are to defend their title, as evidenced by the 1-0 win over Aston Villa on Monday.

This summer has not panned out the way Mikel Arteta had envisaged when he spoke about having weapons and "ambition" after winning the Premier League last term. Arteta, the Arsenal manager, wanted to cement the gap to Manchester City and move towards the fast and fluent style of Paris Saint-Germain, who beat them on penalties in the Champions League final. "Now we have to show that we belong at this level and we want to increase and take this football club to a different dimension," Arteta said in July.

For two years, Arteta has wanted an elite left winger and clinical striker. Arsenal were outbid for Morgan Rogers by Chelsea while Julián Álvarez, Vinícius Jr and Kenan Yildiz have stayed at their clubs. They join a list of targets whom Arsenal have failed to lure to north London in recent years, which includes Nico Williams, Raphinha, Mykhailo Mudryk and Pedro Neto.

Arteta often says that every player he speaks to wants to join Arsenal, but the reality is that the Atletico Madrid forward Álvarez and Athletic Bilbao winger Williams have turned down opportunities to do so in the past year.

Arsenal have unquestionably strengthened their defence and midfield, but their attack lacks pace and is lighter by a left winger and forward after the sales of Gabriel Martinelli, Leandro Trossard and Gabriel Jesus.

Arteta will hope that the forwards Kai Havertz and Bukayo Saka stay fit and the 16-year-old Max Dowman continues his development and provides unpredictability. It is undoubtedly a gamble, especially given the club's recent injury record.

Arsenal signed Christos Tzolis to be an understudy on the left wing and will now rotate with Eberechi Eze, who needed time to be trusted on the flank. Noni Madueke has almost exclusively played on the right-hand side as cover for Saka. Tzolis, 24, has made a bright start at the club but had a tough time at Villa Park before Eze fashioned the decisive goal. Up top, Viktor Gyokeres has not played in either of the opening two league games and Mikel Merino, the Spain midfielder, is the only other option as a stand-in No 9.

In contrast, City and PSG did the business they wanted and finished the window with refreshed squads. City signed three midfielders, each of whom cost more than Arsenal's most expensive arrival — the £75 million Brazil midfielder Bruno Guimarães.

Trying to sign a top player can be a lengthy process. Arteta began his sales pitch to Declan Rice about seven months before Arsenal agreed a deal — which was more expensive than they had initially envisaged — to sign the the England midfielder in 2023 for £105 million from West Ham United. When City tried to hijack the deal late on, Rice could not be turned.

Morgan Rogers
Arsenal were only prepared to pay about £100m for attacking midfielder who went to Chelsea for £117m

Vinicius Jr.
Arsenal were interested in the Real Madrid and Brazil forward who ultimately decided to extend his contract in Spain

This time, Arsenal seem to have been slow off the mark. Arteta went against what he said last summer, when he insisted that the club should not spend a long time chasing one target without being able to quickly pivot to a fallback option. They had targeted Álvarez from early spring but it became clear the forward wanted to leave Atletico for Barcelona in June. Despite what Arteta had said, Arsenal spent the summer trying to persuade Álvarez to come to England, bargaining on Atletico's refusal to sell to Barça.

Some supporters will point fingers at Berta. The Italian won plaudits for his approach of simultaneously negotiating with several players to strike the best deal after he added depth to Arsenal's squad last summer. This time, delaying on striking a deal for Rogers allowed Arsenal to be blindsided by Chelsea, who took a few days to strike a £117 million deal with Aston Villa for the 24-year-old.

Arsenal were asked three times if they wanted to match the fee, having been prepared to pay only about £100 million. Had Arsenal tabled a bid of that value earlier in the summer, before Villa could cite other fees paid in the window to increase their asking price, Arsenal might have secured Rogers.

It is not clear whether Arsenal dragged their feet because they thought they had a realistic chance of signing Vinícius Jr, a global icon who became a viable target because of a contract dispute with Real Madrid. After Vinícius signed a new deal — on better terms after Arsenal's touted interest, leading to suggestions that the 26-year-old played them — Arsenal tried again for Yildiz, but Juventus refused to sell the 21-year-old Turkey winger.

Last summer, Arsenal were fishing in a different pool, without serious competition, and made eight signings. Berta persuaded Arteta to sign Viktor Gyokeres over Benjamin Sesko because of the Sweden striker's lower price. He also signed Piero Hincapié, Noni Madueke, Kepa Arrizabalaga, Cristhian Mosquera and Christian Norgaard. The deal for Martín Zubimendi was done before Berta arrived in April 2025. Arsenal hijacked Eberechi Eze's proposed move to Tottenham Hotspur thanks to the former executive vice-chair Tim Lewis's favourable relationship with Crystal Palace.

Berta has a clear recruitment philosophy. He won't pay more than Arsenal's valuation of a player, and only approaches teams with formal bids once he knows it will be accepted. It has rubbed up some agents and clubs the wrong way. Arsenal felt Bradley Barcola, Sandro Tonali, Ayyoub Bouaddi and Mateus Fernandes were overpriced before they joined rival clubs. This summer it was noticeable that Josh Kroenke, the co-chairman at Arsenal, was involved in the talks with Villa over Rogers and Ezri Konsa, the centre back who joined for £51 million.

Arteta had said he wanted only stardust this summer and recently admitted that few players have been available who could improve the squad. He was offered Iliman Ndiaye, the winger who joined City for £65 million, and went against other views in the club by deciding against signing Malick Fofana, the winger who joined Sunderland from Lyon for £30 million on Tuesday.

Arsenal have kept their money in their pocket, but may have to wait until next summer to make any meaningful additions to the squad as it is is typically difficult to buy big names in the January window.

Arteta and Berta have faced the

Berta has been under pressure from the club's owners to sell players

Christos Tzolis
Greek winger was signed to be an understudy on the left from Club Brugge but Arsenal will now rotate him with Eberechi Eze

Julián Alvarez
Arsenal identified Atletico Madrid forward as a target in the spring but were unable to persuade him to return to England

separate issue of being under pressure to sell from the club's owners. Martinelli will become the club's record sale and the first player they have sold to the Saudi Pro League after his move to Al Hilal for £55.7 million is confirmed. They received £15 million from Besiktas for Trossard, who was replaced with Tzolis for £34 million, but Arsenal received less than they had hoped for Gabriel Jesus and Fábio Vieira, who have moved to Barcelona and Hamburg respectively.

Arteta believes that their success on the pitch can help the club continue to grow revenue off it and that it would be unwise to sell players who have the potential to be worth more in the future. However, Arsenal were willing to listen to offers for the 19-year-old talents Ethan Nwaneri, who has been loaned out to Borussia Dortmund, and Myles Lewis-Skelly, who was offered to Chelsea and Manchester United.

"There isn't any club in Europe that has the growth of Arsenal in value, performances, revenues," Arteta said last week. "We're taking an approach that has increased the level and the capacity of the club — big time."

He finished the quote by smiling. Arteta knows that his success has earned him power, and the 44-year-old is expected to sign a new three-year contract. The acquisitions of Guimarães and Konsa, who are 28, are aimed at winning now rather than building a succession plan for the club. At 27, Declan Rice is the second-youngest midfielder in the squad, behind Lewis-Skelly.

Arsenal are poised to announce the signing of Andria Bartishvili, the 17-year-old winger whose running and close control have led to comparisons with his Georgian compatriot Khvicha Kvaratskhelia. They have also re-stocked the academy.

Arsenal briefly looked at whether Kvaratskhelia would be available when he was out of favour at PSG during last season. PSG rebuffed their interest and signed the left winger Mika Godts from Ajax to support Kvaratskhelia, followed a day later by Spain's World Cup-winning forward Ferran Torres. That is the level to which Arteta is still aspiring.

Major outs

Leandro Trossard
to Besiktas
£15.4m

Jakub Kiwior
Porto
£14.6m

Gabriel Jesus
Barcelona
£8.6m

Fabio Vieira
Hamburg
£8.6m

Christian Norgaard
Everton
£7m

Major ins

Bruno Guimaraes
from Newcastle
£75m

Ezri Konsa
Aston Villa
£51m

Piero Hincapie
Bayer Leverkusen, following loan
£34.5m

Christos Tzolis
Club Brugge
£34m

Hull outspending Barcelona shows up obscene madness

Gregor Robertson

Was this the summer when the Premier League finally unmoored itself from reality? Many would argue that the money washing around in English football's top tier brought that to bear many years ago, of course, but even by the Premier League's standards of economic madness the sums traded during the past 2½ months were so obscene, so far removed from any sense of value, that a clear shift appears to have taken place this summer.

No doubt you're getting used to hearing how Premier League clubs spent more than all the clubs in the Bundesliga, Serie A, La Liga and Ligue 1 combined by now. This year, though, the Premier League spent another billion on top, and almost as much on deadline day (£475 million) as Ligue 1 clubs spent during the entire window.

It is a crowded field, but the British record-equalling £125 million transfer of Enzo Fernández from Chelsea to Manchester City feels like the most fitting symbol of the way the laws of supply and demand appear to have been subverted this summer. Question: who, other than City, *really* wanted Fernández? Who were Enzo Maresca's side competing against for his signature?

Fernández is the first player to be transferred twice for fees in excess of £100million, and yet on both occasions — when Chelsea signed the Argentina midfielder from Benfica in 2023, and when his protracted move to City was finally completed on deadline day — no other club would have touched him with a bargepole at that value.

That says something about Fernández as a player, perhaps, but it says far more about a Premier League that now clearly operates within its own distinct economy, in which many assets are now virtually unsellable outside England (other than, occasionally, the Saudi Pro League).

Intra-Premier League spending was a staggering £1.7 billion this summer, more than double the amount spent two years ago. Even if some of that is a result of a desire to minimise risk and sign proven Premier League players, more deals than ever seem to be being made for business reasons, rather than football ones. It is absurd that the Premier League's spending regulations have, unwittingly or not, incentivised trading, and arguably inflated transfer fees.

There were five £100 million-plus transfers this summer and of the ten clubs involved only one, Paris Saint-Germain, who sold Bradley Barcola to Liverpool, compete outside the Premier League. Twenty players joined Premier League clubs for fees of £50million or more; only four of them arrived from a non-Premier League club. The fees lavished on Sávio (£85 million), Nicolas Jackson (£65 million), Sandro Tonali (£100 million) and others were reflective of a widespread and underlying sense of desperation this summer.

Yet somehow, despite such exorbitant spending, very few head coaches or supporters appear satisfied with their squads. Other than Arsenal, the wealthiest clubs have all regressed or are in a period of transition. But the transfer market has almost become a sport unto itself, to be won and lost, ranked and graded depending on the scale of investment and number and profile of recruits.

On deadline day Hull City's TV mogul owner, Acun Ilicali — dubbed the "Turkish Simon Cowell" — tapped into the zeitgeist when he posted on X: "Dear Hull City fans, get ready for 22:00 to 23:00. We are working on the last details. You know I love deadline days. It's going to be a deadline day roar [Tiger emoji]."

By the time the window closed Hull had made six new signings to take their total number of recruits to 18 since winning promotion via the Championship play-offs. To underline the scale of their investment, Hull — along with their fellow promoted clubs Ipswich Town and Coventry City — recorded a higher net spend than Barcelona.

Perhaps this was always going to be the end result of the Premier League's vastly superior broadcast revenue deals, which now mean even the smallest clubs regularly pillage the rest of Europe for talent. The raiding of Ligue 1, in particular, has been remarkable. France's top tier earned about £957million from player sales this summer; Premier League clubs accounted for about

Nobel Mendy, signed for £21 million, was one of 18 new signings at Hull

two thirds of that, with the headline transfers being Liverpool signing Barcola and Manchester City buying Ayyoub Bouaddi from Lille for £86 million.

As the football finance expert Kieran Maguire pointed out, when today's purchasing power is taken into account, this summer's biggest signings are actually still dwarfed by, for example, Alan Shearer's £15 million switch from Blackburn Rovers to Newcastle United in 1996, or Juan Sebastián Verón's £28 million move from Lazio to Manchester United in 2001. But that doesn't make this era of reckless spending and excess any less crude or unimaginative.

So where does this end, if it ever will? Is the Premier League inflating a bubble that could burst? Quite how an economic shock may arrive upon a division into which corporate wealth continues to flow unabated is a question to which there is no clear answer.

Something Tom Wagner, Birmingham City's US financier co-owner, told me last year underlines why, even in these uncertain times, that investment shows no sign of slowing.

"As real-world interpersonal connections fade and the world digitises, where are people going to turn for enjoyment?" Wagner said. "I think sport will be at the top of the list."

Sport

Mike Atherton

Mid-series purge has turned Pakistan into laughing stock

Page 54

Arsenal's forward failure

Inability to land prime targets leaves champions blunt up top

Pages 60-61

Five-year ban from driving for Woods

Golfer avoids jail after agreeing to reduced charge

Rick Broadbent

Tiger Woods has been banned from driving for five years and fined $1,000 after pleading no contest to a reckless driving charge in relation to the car crash near his Florida home in March.

The 15-times major champion, 50, had previously pleaded not guilty to an additional driving under the influence charge, but agreed to the reduced charge as he entered a plea agreement at the Martin County court yesterday. A no-contest plea means that a defendant refuses to admit or deny guilt but accepts punishment as if guilty. The agreement meant that Woods avoided the possibility of going to jail.

Woods arrived at the courthouse with his girlfriend, Vanessa Trump, President Trump's former daughter-in-law, and said little during the hearing while sitting at the defence table.

The American was arrested in March after his Land Rover clipped a truck pulling a pressure cleaner and rolled on to its side. He had been travelling at high speed on a residential road in Jupiter Island with a 30mph speed limit when his car collided with the truck, causing $5,000 (about £3,700) in damage to the other vehicle, according to an incident report. At the time, Sheriff John Budensiek said Woods had been attempting to overtake at high speed. He crawled out through the passenger window and passed a breathalyser test, but refused to give a urine sample. He was "co-operative", said Budensiek, "but was trying not to incriminate himself". The police believed he was impaired by "some type of medication or drug".

Woods admitted that he had been looking down at his phone just before the crash occurred. The sheriff's office report said deputies found two painkiller tablets in his pocket. Woods quickly issued a statement in March, saying: "I know and understand the seriousness of the situation I find myself in today. I am stepping away for a period of time to seek treatment and focus on my health." He travelled to Switzerland to have treatment at a rehab centre.

In July, Judge Darren Steele approved an agreement in which prosecutors were allowed to review medical records related to Woods's crash and arrest. The judge signed off on a similar agreement in May that grants prosecutors access to all prescription medication records for Woods at a Palm Beach pharmacy from the start of the year to the end of March.

Thomas Bakkedahl, the Florida state attorney, defended his decision to accept the plea, saying: "I did what I think is right. I'm confident and comfortable with the resolution of this case. Today, I resolved a case involving a man who drives a golf ball for a living. Tomorrow, I'll resolve a case in the same matter for a man who drives a nail for a living."

Woods has not played a golf event since the 2024 Open and has been struggling to rebuild his career after the 2021 car crash in which he almost lost a leg. In 2017, he was also arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence when found asleep at the wheel.

SAUL MARTINEZ/GETTY IMAGES

Woods and Vanessa Trump leave the Florida court after he was sentenced

Balogun 'not comfortable' with Everton

Peter Rutzler, Ian Whittell

Thiago Scuro, the Monaco chief executive, has claimed that Folarin Balogun withdrew from his proposed transfer to Everton on deadline day because he "did not feel comfortable" signing a long-term contract with the club, after the Premier League side had raised concerns during his medical.

Scuro, who negotiated the deals, insisted that he did not want to "create war" with Everton or Chelsea after the collapse of two transfers on deadline day, as both Monaco players, Balogun and Lamine Camara, failed to complete moves to the two Premier League clubs.

Chelsea had made a late attempt to sign Camara, following the departure of Enzo Fernández to Manchester City, and had agreed a £47 million deal after the Balogun agreement verged on collapse. Monaco then withdrew from that deal just before the deadline, much to Chelsea's fury, after Everton renegotiated the terms of their deal to sign Balogun. Balogun then had a change of heart and opted to return to Monaco.

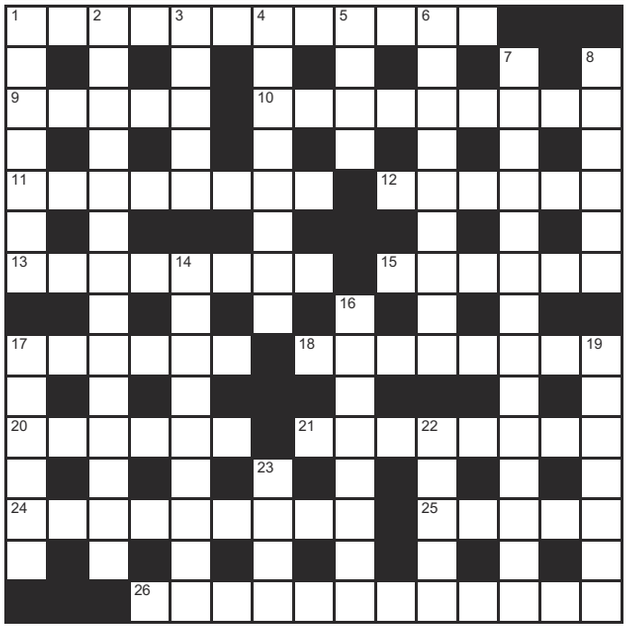
Speaking at a press conference in Monaco yesterday morning, Scuro said that Balogun was unhappy with how Everton had treated him.

"The Premier League has a mechanism where you can request one extra hour to finish the paperwork. This was done," Scuro said. "I signed the contract, Everton signed the contract. At the last moment, the player decided not to sign. And basically, the allegation of Balogun is that 'I'm not feeling well by the way the club treated me. I'm not feeling well by the way the medical department of Everton brought doubts about my future or my health. I'm not comfortable to sign a long contract here.'"

Everton sources suggested that an issue that the club were not previously aware of was identified in Balogun's medical, and that as a result a lower fee

Continued on page 59

Times Crossword 29,638



ACROSS

1 Playing online as no good, grasping spies hacked Gmail (6,6)
9 Several performing? In hindsight, slightly fewer (5)
10 School keeps toilet within another, a sluggish one (9)
11 Really poor casting or poor performance of part? (4,4)
12 Laid out voguish drug after drink (6)
13 Accepted both sides in Anfield wearing baseball gear? (8)
15 Youthful new lover consumed by sex (6)
17 Boundary one put up with no area inside (6)
18 Completely misguided artist wearing backless fleece jumper (8)
20 Offensive "cheers" when returning food (6)
21 A reservoir selling water (5,3)
24 European place, not quite wild Vienna (9)
25 Improviser initially overwhelmed by jazz chord (5)
26 Pressure troops trailing unit to strike arena (12)

DOWN

1 Booze worked as vocalist spun melody (7)
2 Left in African river, missionary expedition's leaders share mass (14)
3 Set about being contrary? (3,2)
4 Crude American releasing small amount of rude material (8)
5 Setting for *Wuthering Heights* or *Othello*? (4)
6 Network, groove, and fool around like night owls (9)
7 Fantastic composer, calm at grand, with Salieri getting upset (7,7)
8 Potential danger hospital is boring nurse (6)
14 Picture best supporting actor, half-cut (3,6)
16 Duke feeding Henry egg prepared with needles (4-4)
17 Animal sounds reported to cook (6)
19 Late public music performance completely out of time (7)
22 Wrong item to go round rabbi's head? (5)
23 Fibrous part taken from scampi, thankfully (4)

Yesterday's solution 29,637

S	H	O	E	S	T	R	I	N	G	■	S	L	I	P
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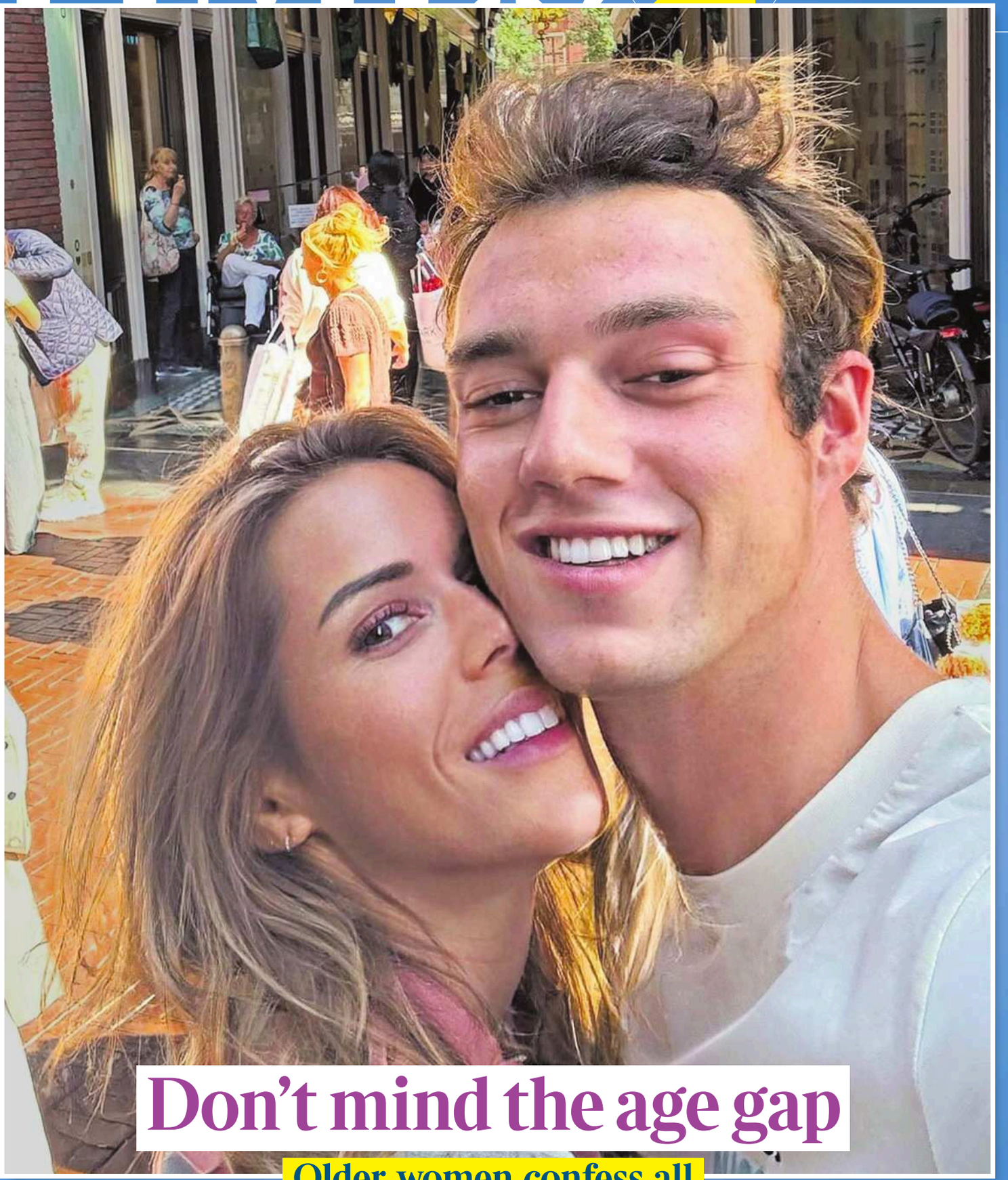
TIMES 2

September 3 | **2026**



Don’t mind the age gap

Older women confess all

Tiphaine Auzière, Brigitte Macron’s 42-year-old daughter, and Antoine Lecomte, 22

tim

Caitlin Moran's Celebrity Watch

6 Claire Kellerman v the island of Great Bernera

Good day, dearest Times reader! And welcome to the week when the eyes of the world turned, unexpectedly, to Great Bernera. For this tiny island in the Outer Hebrides with a population of 212 has, in recent years, had a new celebrity inhabitant. And, so far, it's not working out terribly well.

"*M*A*S*H* star's daughter at war with islanders over dog ban: charity reveals it's on the verge of bankruptcy after she wrongly sued them when café refused to let her pet inside." Usually an endless dailymail.com headline gives us all the information we need about a particular story. But in this case there is waaaay more than these initial 30 words let on.

The situation? The American-born Claire Kellerman — daughter of Sally Kellerman (*right, with Claire*), who played "Hot Lips" Houlihan in the movie *M*A*S*H* — moved to Great Bernera four years ago to practise "Celtic Viking mysticism". I know. Suffice to say her arrival has been what we may call "a mixed blessing" for the locals because Kellerman seems to be "a colourful character". Her primary problem is her dog, Lady Tarkina Snow Fire, who has a lot of allegations against her: "harassing livestock, chasing wild animals", and "defecating on a public bus which Kellerman then did not clean up".

There are also unconfirmed reports that Lady Tarkina Snow Fire attacked a cat in Stornoway — where Kellerman lived previously, and sued *thirteen* businesses also for not allowing her dog in — but Kellerman is very firm on this issue. "That cat attacked me," she said, before explaining that Lady Tarkina Snow Fire "barks incessantly because she is so upset about life".

Dogs are not allowed in Great Bernera's café/community centre but Kellerman claims the dog is an "assistance dog", aiding her with "an undisclosed disability". Eager to still access scones while accompanied by the rectally untrustworthy Lady Tarkina Snow Fire, Kellerman has set about suing the café for "exclusion, collective harassment, shaming, ostracisation, wrongful blaming, illegal discrimination and victimisation".

"I live by the guidance that follows my prayers, asking always: how can I be of Sacred Service?" Kellerman explained, on LinkedIn. To date, this "Sacred Service" has entailed Kellerman accidentally suing the wrong organisation, using legal aid, and running up fees of £7,000, before realising her mistake and switching her case to the right café, which now faces legal fees of £10,000 and bankruptcy.

Of course, it's easy to take the side of the beleaguered islanders who have seen their community come under costly legal attack from an American showbiz newcomer with a) a made-up brand of mysticism and b) a loose-arsed, barking dog. But as Kellerman explained, "I'm Scottish from at least 493AD — and most likely even further back. I have every single person on the way to me — including Robert the Bruce and Mary Queen of Scots. I couldn't be anything further from an entitled American. What I am is a very creative, very courageous and very humble woman. I am a beautiful stranger who has been abused."

I have to say, on balance, this all seems perfectly legit. The people of Great Bernera simply have to accept that Kellerman, born in California, *is* more Scottish than they are, and that you can't argue with someone performing a "Sacred Service" that entails a huge, woofing, plopping dog disrupting your café. As I'm sure the incredibly Scottish Kellerman said, when refused a sandwich, "You may take my loaves, but you'll never take my freedom!"

5 Jacob Elordi

As we all know, the debate over who the new James Bond is has been raging since before the Earth cooled, and may well continue until this planet finally burns up. I think we are all increasingly aware that "a single casting decision on a formulaic movie" is one of the biggest problems humanity has faced — far bigger than peace in the Middle East or making cold fusion a reality — and that if there isn't already UN support for it, there should be.

At this point we are all grasping at straws for who will take on the gig, so my eye was caught by the following headline on nme.com: "Jacob Elordi dodges red carpet question about James Bond audition."

Sadly, I was too exhausted from the decades-long Bond conjecture to read further, but if Elordi dodged that questioning by tucking, rolling, then jumping off a moving train while holding a gun in a "sexy" way, I think we can take that as a "yes, I have the job".

I hope we can, anyway. This has all been so *long*.

4 Scotland

While we're on "Hollywood blockbuster news", let us turn our attention to an outbreak of profound japery north of the border, where a new Batman film is being shot. So that we might not suddenly run out of Batman films.

"Scottish Batman fans are trying to sneak Irn-Bru into new sequel," the headline ran.

Reading on, we learnt that *The Batman Part II* is being shot in Glasgow and locals have set themselves a droll challenge. According to The Sun, on-set security have had to start searching bins and hot dog stands to make sure that the "distinctive orange cans" have not been placed there by proud Scots.

Well, obviously I'm all here for this kind of whimsy and, indeed, feel scornful towards any communities who have not attempted a similar kind of thing when film crews were shooting in their neighbourhoods. Wouldn't *Game of Thrones*, shot in Northern Ireland, have been so much better if it had featured, just once, a sneaky *Derry Girls* mural? As if those girls were some ancient band of pagan gods, looking down on passing dragons? Why is the graffiti artist 10FOOT not all over *EastEnders* as he is all over real London? And *Peaky Blinders* loses a lot of local flavour by never once, wherever in Birmingham it roams, featuring a man in a Dryrobe® and sliders, vaping in the background of a shot where Cillian Murphy is wearing a hat.

3 Megan Prescott

More breaking news from the frontier of the creative arts, where funding is plummeting and "disruptive" free streaming technologies have left a generation wondering how they can answer that most fundamental of questions: "How is this bitch going to pay rent?"

The *Skins* star Megan Prescott has given an interview, explaining that her new presence on OnlyFans — which hosts "adult" content — has made her "three times more money than the teen drama".

"It's given me the liberty," Prescott explained, going on to list how it had allowed her to finance writing and starring in her own play. Prescott — who charged £11 a month for nude content and personalised videos — has joined a host of other stars, including Kate Nash, Lily Allen and the Harry Potter star Jessie Cave in producing adult content to pay the bills that acting or singing can't.

There's a massive feminist discussion to be had here: primarily about how insane it is that the creative arts — which contributes £145.8 billion to the British economy — has allowed the money to flow upwards to tech companies while putting a whole generation of new talent on less than minimum wage.

But my primary take-home today is: this is going to be terrible for men. At least female actors and singers *can* turn to soft porn to pay the bills! There just isn't that market for men! Women won't pay to see willies! We see enough of them anyway! Dick pics have sabotaged the paid-for penis market! This *is* reverse sexism! Male artists are screwed!

2 Elon Musk

Another month, another moment to ponder the big question: "Is Elon Musk, the man who intends to send humanity to Mars, actually quite *thick*?"

Four years ago, Musk bought Twitter: the most-discussed social media platform on the planet, one that was host to the greatest gathering of names, supplying free content, the world has seen. The Pope was on there! The Dalai Lama! Barack Obama! Malala! Lady Gaga! Cristiano Ronaldo! Richard Osman!

However, on purchasing Twitter, Musk promptly changed the platform's name to the endlessly sinister X and madly started charging the celebrities to post there. Most, understandably,

buggered off. Nazis and child sex abuse flooded the site. Suddenly, Musk was left in a situation where he'd paid $44 billion for a name he didn't use and a community he'd chased away.

Perhaps inevitably given this snafu, this week a former Twitter board member announced he was "bringing Twitter back". Twitter.now claims, quite reasonably, that "the Twitter identity and intellectual property were abandoned" by Musk in favour of X, and that the new Operation Bluebird company intends to "rebuild trust" in the idea of social media. News of this new/old Twitter has been so exciting that the sign-up facility crashed, suggesting a *lot* of people hate X and just want old skool Twitter back.

In other words, Musk — supposedly one of the great businessmen of our age — never understood what he was paying $44 billion for and has screwed it up so badly that a bunch of guys from Virginia are going to show the first trillionaire how to run a business that people actually like. Which means he's... not that bright after all?

1

Dolly Parton

Last week the world mourned the death of Dolly Parton, a woman whose multiple life achievements are (only partly) reflected in the incredible sentence, "She wrote *I Will Always Love You* and *Jolene* on the same day, and then — alongside countless other acts of philanthropy — funded the breakthrough Covid vaccine."

Bang. *What* a mic drop. Two absolute stone-dead bangers knocked out in the time it takes most of us to make a moussaka, *and* countless lives saved through a pioneering donation. Usually, you're either a pop genius or a humanitarian icon. With respect to Gandhi, he has a minimal profile on Spotify, and no one is drunkenly karaokeing anything by Louis Pasteur. But Dolly could do both. Of *course* they lit up the Empire State Building in pink to mark her passing.

Most philanthropists have earned their billions by engaging in — let's face it — mid-level unpleasantness. Largesse is the realm of tech bros, robber barons and sundry titans of bastardry. But Dolly used her Dollywood theme park — a joyful place! Families playing and having fun! — to fund the Imagination Library, which, at the last tally, had gifted more than 300 million books to children. Happiness from happiness. Joy from joy. What an *elevated* machine of love Parton constructed for the benefit of us all.

I, like you, got her Covid vaccine in my arm — queueing in those huge, shuffling marquees of hope, during that long winter — then came home to see her on Instagram singing *Jolene* while she received her own vaccine, but with the lyrics changed to, "Vaccine/ Vaccine/ Vaccine/ Vac-ciiiiiine!" What a baller.

Of course, in all the love letters and obituaries, Dolly's philanthropy was mentioned over and over, along with her musical genius. Quite rightly, every spark and gift was listed, and marvelled over. But I want to chip in by lauding something that might initially, for a feminist, seem counterintuitive: her *beauty.*

For Dolly — alongside everything else she achieved — was also, for a time, The Sex Girl. The go-to name if a comedian was making a joke about someone hot. The prompt for otherwise respectable chat show hosts to murmur, "I'd give a month's wages to look under that dress."

For nearly two decades — until she was eventually replaced by Pamela Anderson, then Kim Kardashian — one of Parton's many pop-culture functions was the work as a shorthand for "hot, bosomy and unafraid of dressing *up*". A real-life Jessica Rabbit.

And I want to give credit to Dolly for how she dealt with that. She was an *astonishingly* pretty person: look at photos of her in her twenties and thirties and your eyes don't know what to rejoice in first. The baby-round, dimpled cheeks; the white, American teeth; the endless blonde curls. She might have joked, adroitly, "It costs a lot of money to look this cheap," but it was a very accessible beauty: anyone can dress up like Dolly, as a million hen nights and drag queens have proved. Sequins and fake flowers in your hair are cheap. You don't need to have surgery to fill out a dress in the way she did — Dolly never dressed skimpy, she rarely even showed her arms, and you can buy padded bras in any shop.

Dolly was having fun with her own beauty and hotness — it never felt like something she was doing to elevate herself above other women. Besides, she was married, incredibly happily, for 50 years so the hotness wasn't for any other purpose than... joy. The joy of gigantic, Appalachian princess wigs; checked shirts knotted, tight, below the bosom. Dolly didn't let her beauty become either a burden or a weapon, as is the case with so many of our culture's Hot Women.

She was both a fabulous person and a wonderful idea. Dolly Parton, you were absolutely tremendous. I hope your legacy is for us to love all the other Dolly-like girls who come up in your wake and let them be as Dolly-like as you.

At what age are you getting on a bit? How to tell people 'not yet'

Deborah Ross

The age you start feeling you're getting on a bit happens at about 50, a survey told us this week. To which I would add: if it's not never. "The tragedy of old age," Oscar Wilde wrote, "is not that one is old, but that one is young." Fifty isn't old, to be clear, but you get my drift. We're all still young. Whatever.

However, while you might think of yourself as that, the world may take a different view. But that's OK, as you can fool it into believing otherwise. To this end, you may wish to deploy the following phrases:

"I hate taking the weight off my feet. It gives me the creeps."

"I'm all for breaking in a new pair of shoes."

"I love loud music in shops, it always makes me want to linger."

"I despise *Antiques Roadshow*, *Fake or Fortune?* and *The Repair Shop*."

"I have no trouble with my memory."

"Cotton Traders does not tempt me for a minute. Ditto Lands' End, and its good value Anyweather™ quarter zip fleece in seven colours, which is £33.75, down from £45, with the code J3CB. I'd rather be dead."

"Fifteen pounds for avocado on toast seems like excellent value."

"I'm always happy to pay café prices."

"The TV must have come with *Antiques Roadshow*, *Fake or Fortune?* and *The Repair Shop* set to record. How else to explain it?"

"Why am I at the Boring Old Aunties and Uncles table at this wedding? Has there been some mistake?"

"Let Lime bikes use the pavements, for heaven's sake. Are pedestrians now expected to mow themselves down?"

"We all make mistakes... shall I just shift myself to the top table?"

"I think I'll order the puhrsgetti."

"I don't remember when the internet went 'chzzxchzxxchchx'. Did it?"

"Napping is for losers."

"I'm into trying new things, so might you talk me through 'pegging'?"

"Putting the kettle on won't solve anything."

"I have no trouble with my memory."

"Don't come to me for advice about wills, lasting power of attorney, pensions or life insurance as I don't have the first idea."

"I don't care if you take a sweater just in case."

"Why assume I can knit (ageist!) when I only know how to crochet?"

"I never wonder about things like: who will one day look at these photos."

"I rely on TikTok wellness influencers for all my health advice and would never point out that taking collagen for your collagen makes about as much sense as eating liver for your liver."

"Thankfully I'm never the most underdeveloped character in any screenplay."

"I'm very into fast fashion and those hems that'll come down in no time and might not last the first wash."

"I looked downwards into a mirror and it was a shock. Someone else was in there."

"I've never given a thought to the fact It Will Happen Someday just as I've never given a thought to How It Will Happen Someday. A coronary event? A golfing mishap? A Lime bike incident? A fall that's *the* fall? Too busy 'pegging' for any of that."

"I have no trouble with my memory."

I'm not up to booking a train

Alas, I did something most foolish the other day. I had to book a train from London to Shrewsbury (and back) and found myself wholly ill equipped. I have only myself to blame. I thought I could do it without having attended the three-year course offered by the British Train Ticket Booking Academy. Big mistake. Huge. Would you allow someone to operate without having been to medical school? So what on earth made me think I could book a train?

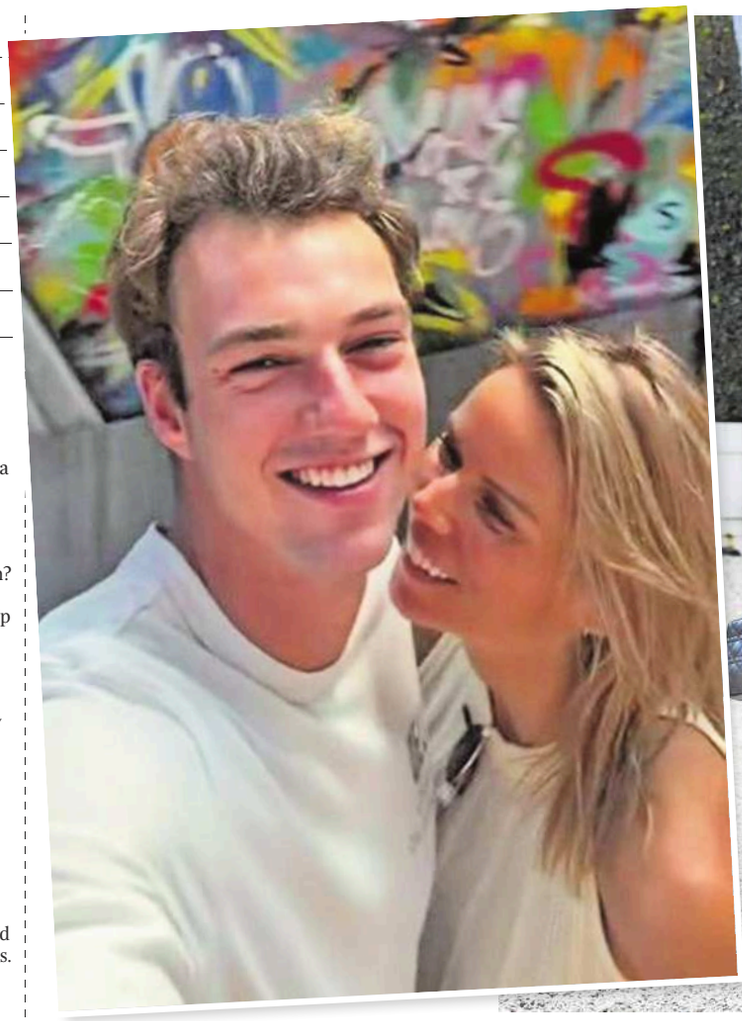
I first went to Trainline, where I discovered all the most reasonably priced tickets were "not available". I chose the less reasonably priced reasonably priced tickets that were available, until I got to the checkout, when they weren't any more. I clicked back to try again by which time the prices had risen. I was booking for a group of four which, said a pop-up, meant I was entitled to the discount that never materialised. I chose new tickets but come the checkout they weren't the trains I had selected, which, given the timings I required, would have been disastrous. I clicked back to find the prices had risen again.

I ditched Trainline and went direct to Avanti West Coast, which was clearer but wanted £1,200, more than it would cost for a Eurostar return to Paris on that date. I sheepishly returned to Trainline, where the price was lower even if the prices had risen again. Trainline is cheaper than booking direct, I deduced, but when I went to book a return to Cheltenham for this weekend? Trainline, £250, and GWR, £95. Who is with me on setting up a Flat Fare Society to campaign on this issue?

That said, I have now enrolled at the British Train Ticket Booking Academy. It's full-time for the three years but as its literature says, "You don't stand a chance otherwise." I'm doing the Off-Peak course, but you can also choose from Peak, Advance, Anytime or Flexi.

Like Brigitte Macron's daughter,

Tiphaine Auzière is now with a man of 22 — half her age. I married my own age-gap boyfriend, says Grace Ackroyd, 48



Tiphaine Auzière, Brigitte Macron's 42-year-old daughter, has gone public about her relationship with Antoine Lecomte, 22, a student and kite-surfing instructor. Quelle horreur! Personally, I think good on her — is it still news that an older woman is dating a younger man?

Of course, there's the added dimension of her mother's relationship with the much younger French president, but these two look happy. Age-wise, they don't look so different (the benefits of French skincare?). They might be madly in love and stay together till one of them dies.

Or perhaps their love will fizzle out before the central heating comes on. Both are feasible outcomes, and I should know because when I hooked up with a man who was 16 years my junior, I believed our relationship would amount to nothing more than a fling. Reader, I married him.

Joab and I were neighbours but we'd only spoken while putting out the bins. I'd recently split up with a boyfriend (eight years older than me, who I thought of as being immature) when Joab got my number from a mutual friend and asked me out for a drink. I remember scrutinising his WhatsApp profile picture (he was 25 at the time, I was 41) and asking my youngest friend at work, also 25, if I should say yes.

Her response? "He's a bit young!" I had to agree. Joab was only seven years older than my eldest child. What would we have in common? What would people think of me? At the time I didn't worry particularly about what future we might have. I just wanted someone to have sex with, someone to go out to dinner with, someone whom I could occasionally watch reruns of *Girls* with once my kids were in bed. Joab ticked all three boxes.

Nearly eight years on, we have a toddler and live in a house with two of my three other children, aged 25, 20 and 15. (Auzière has reportedly introduced Lecomte to her two children, Élise and Aurèle, with her ex-partner Antoine Choteau.)

Joab and I will celebrate our first wedding anniversary in a couple of days. Life is good. Life is better than I expected it would be. Life isn't always happy, but the love and respect I give is reflected back at me constantly. I'm glad our relationship didn't fizzle after a few months, and that we didn't listen to the occasional naysayer who wrongly predicted that a relationship like ours was destined to fail.

Even with the arrival of on-screen romances featuring a number of considerable age gaps (*Babygirl*, *Bridget Jones: Mad About the Boy*, *The Idea of You*), I still can't find anything that even slightly resembles our age-gap relationship. The stories I encounter seem to feed off the clichés, rather than challenge them; the hot, horny young guy looking for excitement and sexual fulfilment with the experienced, sexy older woman.

The woman always seems to lose out, either by being disappointed with the younger man's inability to commit. Or because the woman is simply delusional for ever imagining that she could have what older men have been having for years (perfectly functional relationships with women who are years younger than they are).

And I don't blame people for being sceptical of age-gap relationships — when I was a teenager, my mother's friend, who was about 40 at the time, had a boyfriend who was in his mid-twenties and that felt a bit gross to me, if I'm honest. I harboured quite ageist and sexist views about women then. It took years to question my views — and even longer to shake them off.

Women are always judged more harshly than men. I've been called a hag, geriatric, ugly, undeserving of love — the list has grown longer as I've written about my life experiences.

From left: Tiphaine Auzière with Antoine Lecomte; with her ex-partner Antoine Choteau and their children in 2022; with her mother, Brigitte Macron, last year

Nasty comments used to floor me, but now I really understand that some people get a kick out of being cruel, and that's their problem, not mine.

I'm grateful for what I've got. I'm just about to head off to a festival with Joab, our first trip away without Ray, our one-year-old. One thing I can predict is this: someone, somewhere, will be standing next to us in a field as we watch a band, and they'll become curious about our relationship because the age difference is obvious: I look like a woman in my late forties; Joab looks like a man in his early thirties.

Grace Ackroyd and Joab

Our neighbour in the crowd might say, as has been said to me before: you're lucky to have such a hot young husband. And I'll smile as if it's the first time anyone's said it to me. But I will also think: he's lucky to have me too.

I can't imagine that everyday intergenerational relationships will be portrayed in a realistic way on screen in the near future. Who needs a story about two people who live together and get on? Boring!

It's the challenges we face and the differences between us that make life interesting. Who wants a "crease-free" relationship? Can Joab and I survive almost anything? We'll have to see.

But please, anyone commenting on this: don't waste energy telling me that Joab will run off with a much younger woman than me. Perhaps he will. But I have just as much chance of doing exactly the same. There really is no guarantee of anything in this world.

I wish Macron's daughter well. Who knows whether her relationship with her one-time kite-surfing teacher will last? Give it a go, is what I say. What is life without a challenge? Very dull.

I fell for a much younger man

SHUTTERSTOCK; WIRE IMAGE; JACK LAWSON FOR THE TIMES

‘Gross, it’s like me dating a sperm,’ my 14-year-old said

Vanessa St Clair, 55

When I first met my younger boyfriend, Matthew, our age gap felt groundbreaking. I was 47 and he was 28. We met in a club, me newly separated from a 13-year marriage of increasing desperation, him out celebrating his birthday. Memories of that night are blurry, but as I remember it he was dancing about in an unbuttoned shirt and I was staggering towards the bar. Ten minutes later my bedazzled hands were all over his impressive pecs: we made out for the rest of the night.

Nowadays the older woman, younger man dynamic is a cliché, but back then, seven years ago, it felt terrifying. Not only was my underwear middle-aged mum-of-three but so were my socks — printed with dachshunds — my functional jeans and, of course, my body. How was any of it fit to be seen by my young Adonis?

Matthew did not mind, of course. He confessed later he was in awe of me too, especially of my having brought up three children on my own. For our first proper date I booked a hotel I could imagine having sex in: not too many florals and no children around the same age as mine (13, 11 and 5 at the time). Beforehand we met in a bar by the river and I could not get over the way his biceps filled out his black T-shirt. Unlike most Gen X men I know, he worked out five days a week, ate protein and barely drank. The only awkward moment was when he asked who my favourite DJ was (Sasha? Digweed? All my references were from the Nineties). Because I’d purposefully left my reading glasses at home, I couldn’t read the menu and had to use my iPhone torch in a little circle of shame. Matthew was genuinely shocked: “You actually can’t see?” I defensively launched into a lecture about ageing eye muscles.

Then, at the last minute, as he was ripping off his T-shirt, I squawked: “We don’t have to do this now!” Matthew laughed, before his brow furrowed with concern — mindful of my boundaries. “I mean, only if you want to?”

I did want to. And I still want to, seven years later. The sex is thrilling and acrobatic, the kind of sex I never thought I’d be brave enough to have. I still swoon when I see Matthew naked, still want to run my hands over his muscular thighs. But it isn’t just sex: over the years, we have woven into each other’s lives in a genuinely supportive way.

We have each other’s backs — but, and it’s a big but, a lot of this is on WhatsApp. Because of my family life, and his work schedule, we only see each other in the flesh a couple of times a week.

From the early days I knew Matthew wanted children of his own one day, so we both agreed it was better he not get too close to mine. He is closer in age to my kids than to me and shares more of my son’s UFC obsession than my own interests. When we first got together my girlfriends were delighted for me; my children, less so. “What’s wrong with him that he only likes old people?” asked my daughter, then aged 11, early on. And, most memorably, the verdict of my son, then 14, on the age gap: “Gross, it’s like me dating a sperm!”

My children are now 20, 18 and 12 and they know him well. He’s more like an older brother than a stepdad. He’s even teaching my daughter to DJ. He comes over, helps to cook and does the washing up, but I also like to go to his clean flat, away from domesticity.

I’ve been happy to introduce Matthew to my brothers and mother, but I have never met his mother — perhaps because I represent a threat to her future grandchildren. We are at different life stages. While he is at a drum’n’bass rave, I am fretting over my raised vegetable beds; while I agonise over which colour to paint the hallway of my Victorian house, he’s agonising over whether he’ll ever afford a flat.

We have broken up several times, and got back together every time, because we still love each other. It’s hard to separate when there is nothing actually wrong.

This, it turns out, is the real cost of the age gap: the consequences pile up. Elderly fatherhood for him; if and when we manage to split up, a lonely old age for me. But for now I’ll take the trade: we still go clubbing together — and he’s even seen me in my dachshund socks.

When we called it quits he gave me a ‘MILF Award’ card

Helen Down, 53

When I heard about Tiphaine Auzière following in her mother’s footsteps, I recalled a recent outing to a Brixton nightclub. There I was, shuffling away on the dancefloor thanks to my ageing back, when a number of young men tried hitting on 53-year-old me, even though several drop-dead gorgeous younger women were among the crowd.

One, an alleged 24-year-old (who eventually turned out to be 22 but thought the extra two years would make all the difference) was so persistent it was hard not to admire his chutzpah. Even once I’d explained I was old enough to be his mother — technically speaking, his grandmother — he asked for my number, which I did not surrender.

> “It was so much fun I didn’t care about other people’s raised eyebrows
>
> **Helen Down**

Mostly because I’m not on the market, not because I’m against dating younger men per se. I once dated a man 18 years my junior. Many people assume younger men approach older women because they’ll be grateful and less likely to reject their advances. But my encounter was with someone far too respectful, kind and intelligent to use me as a so-called easy option.

I met him on my 50th birthday while celebrating/commiserating with a spot of nostalgic raving. We got chatting on the dancefloor and discovered we had enough in common to bridge the age gap. Like me, he was a writer, loved surfing and had a quirky sense of humour. Even though I gave him my number, I assumed I’d never hear from him, but he texted on his way home and we went for a drink a few days later. This drink was followed by six months of cocktails, exhibitions, dancing, gigs, surfing and travelling. It was so much fun that I didn’t much care about other people’s raised eyebrows.

I was newly divorced and enjoying my freedom. He was tired of feeling pressured to settle down by women his own age. Neither of us were looking to walk down the aisle or spend weekends browsing the John Lewis baby department. With the stakes being so low, our time together was so liberating.

Eventually, though, you realise fun doesn’t equal longevity. When we called it quits he gave me a tongue-in-cheek card with a rosette saying “First Place MILF Award”. Yet the two-page message inside was anything but tongue-in-cheek. I cried when I read, “You’ve changed my view of dating and relationships for the better.”

The sentiment was reciprocated. As a Gen Xer who grew up in the age of irony and struggled to communicate genuine emotion, I found his millennial vulnerability and openness inspiring. He restored my faith in finding love again. And one year later I did. With a man who’ll be planning his 60th in a couple of years.

Maybe I just got lucky. I expect most 32-year-olds aren’t quite as respectful. Yet even when the emotional connection is missing, there are many benefits. Older women are more self-assured, more sorted in their careers, and in my experience young men like the casualness of the “no consequences” arrangement. They can be young and horny without getting hitched or having babies, while you get to feel good about yourself again. A win-win.

Some people get the ick at the thought of an older woman getting jiggy with a younger man. It’s probably why the chosen term for this woman — “cougar” — is so insultingly predatory. Yet seeing as though men have been dating younger women since the dawn of humanity, it’s about time women were allowed a guilt-free slice of the action.

Here come the girls: the future queens of Europe (and they have a WhatsApp)

Norway has a new crown princess — and Gen Z queens may soon rule over the continent. By Damian Whitworth

When King Haakon VIII of Norway swore the oath of allegiance with his 22-year-old daughter Crown Princess Ingrid Alexandra at his side (his wife, Queen Mette-Marit, is unwell), it was a reminder of how different the thrones of Europe will one day look.

Although none of the monarchies of Europe has a reigning queen, a pride of young princesses are waiting. One day there could be a quartet of Gen Z queens sitting in European palaces. Victoria, Crown Princess of Sweden, who is 49, looks likely to be a generation ahead of them, but the twentysomethings who will follow are being talked of as vital royal brand refreshers.

In five of the continent's constitutional monarchies, the heir is a woman. Ingrid Alexandra, the crown princess of Norway, is the newest member of the heir apparent club. She is the daughter of King Haakon VIII, 53, who became king last month, and Queen Mette-Marit, 53. She benefited from a change in the law of primogeniture in 1990 that made it possible for the eldest child, of either sex, to inherit the throne.

Leonor, Princess of Asturias, 20, daughter of King Felipe VI, 58, and Queen Letizia, 53, has been the heir to the throne of Spain since she was an eight-year-old in 2014. That's when her scandal-plagued grandfather King Juan Carlos I abdicated in favour of his son. The controversies around Juan Carlos included his infidelities, accusations of taking kickbacks over a high-speed rail contract in Saudi Arabia and an elephant-hunting trip he took when the country was in recession and he was honorary president of the WWF in Spain. He now lives on an island in Abu Dhabi and the rest of the family have little to do with him.

The quartet is completed by Princess Catharina-Amalia of the Netherlands, 22, the daughter of King Willem-Alexander, 59, and Queen Maxima, 55; and Princess Elisabeth, Duchess of Brabant, 24, the daughter of King Philippe of Belgium, 66, and Queen Mathilde, 53. She will make history as the country's first queen regnant.

All are highly educated (to an extent that may make a British royal blush), military-trained in anticipation of the day they will become commanders-in-chief and already hinting that they will do things a little differently.

Elisabeth told a journalist that she is in a WhatsApp group with Catharina-Amalia and Ingrid Alexandra. "We've known each other a long time and see each other occasionally," she told a Dutch newspaper, HNL, after completing her master's from Harvard Kennedy School. "In my generation, there are several women. You see a similar shift in other monarchies. We are all in the same situation. It's a hurdle we face together."

> **We are all in the same situation. It's a hurdle we face together**

When Catharina-Amalia turned 18 she wrote to the Dutch prime minister saying that she would forgo the allowance she was entitled to receive from the state, saying she found it "uncomfortable as long as I do not do anything for it in return, and while other students have a much tougher time of it, particularly in this period of coronavirus".

But not all her efforts to be normal worked out. She started off living in student housing in Amsterdam but had to move back to the royal residence because of security threats. Later, she spent a year living in Madrid under the protection of the Spanish royal family because of kidnap threats by the "Mocro" mafia, a crime group based in the Moroccan immigrant population.

In echoes of the way Prince William and Prince Harry began speaking openly about their mental health, Catharina-Amalia has talked about her therapy. "Sometimes it all gets too much for me — school, friends — and then I talk to someone," she said.

Given the lifetime of public service and attention ahead, it is unsurprising that they all seem to want to live a normal life sometimes. Elisabeth's attempts to go under the radar reportedly included taking Oxford entrance exams anonymously. Later, when rowing for the Lincoln College Boat Club, she signed up under "Elisabeth de Saxe-Cobourg" — which might not have been quite as incognito as she had hoped.

Norway
Crown Princess Ingrid Alexandra
Age 22
Education After attending a local state primary school she went to the Oslo International School, reportedly because her parents were keen that she become a fluent English speaker. She later completed her education at state schools, including Uranienborg

From left: Crown Princess Ingrid Alexandra of Norway; Princess Catharina-Amalia of the Netherlands; Leonor, Princess of Asturias; Princess Elisabeth, Duchess of Brabant. Above right: Ingrid Alexandra with her mother, Queen Mette-Marit, in 2023

School, where she was on the student council. Last year she began studying international relations and political economy at the University of Sydney, but later transferred back to the University of Oslo, to be closer to her mother, who has had a lung transplant.

Partner No publicly confirmed partner since a two-year relationship with student Magnus Heien Haugstad ended in 2024.

Sportiness Won a gold medal in the junior women's final of the Norwegian surfing championship in 2020. Enjoys kickboxing, skiing and water sports.

Battle readiness Did 15 months of military service including serving as a gunner on a CV-90 infantry fighting vehicle.

Fashionability Vivienne Westwood, Galedi London, and Alexander McQueen for formal events, Larriet, House of Hygge, and Mara Hoffman when off-duty.

Embarrassing relatives Her half-brother, Marius Borg Hoiby (her mother's son from a previous relationship with a drug dealer) was this year sentenced to four years in prison for two rapes. Their mother, Mette-Marit, issued a "profound apology" over her close friendship with Jeffrey Epstein. In a private Instagram post reported by the Norwegian media at the height of the scandal earlier this year, Ingrid Alexandra seemed to criticise the media. "It's not about any case, not Marius, not Mom or Dad or Magnus. It's about personal attacks. It can apply to anyone. But it often applies to us. I chose to post it here. Because I'm going crazy. When is enough?" Her aunt Princess Martha Louise is married to a shaman, Durek Verrett.

Might say "Jeffrey who?"

Probably won't say "Do you want to follow me on Insta?"

Spain
Leonor, Princess of Asturias

Age 20

Education After private schools in Madrid she did a two-year International Baccalaureate programme at UWC Atlantic College in Wales, aka the "Hippy Hogwarts". She learnt English from a British nanny. She is starting a political science degree at Charles III University in Madrid.

Partner In the past there were rumours, never confirmed, of a romance with the Spanish footballer Gavi.

Sportiness Enjoys skiing, tennis and gymnastics.

Battle readiness Spent three years undertaking army, navy and air force training, including becoming the first Spanish royal woman to fly a military plane solo.

Fashion Vogue said she has inherited the "chic style" of her grandmother Queen Sofia.

Embarrassing relatives Her grandfather King Juan Carlos lives in self-imposed exile on a private island in Abu Dhabi after a variety of scandals involving women, money and elephant hunting.

Might say "I feel the need, the need for speed."

Probably won't say "Who's up for a spot of elephant hunting?"

Netherlands
Princess Catharina-Amalia

Age 22

Education State primary school and then the independent Christelijk Gymnasium Sorghvliet in the Hague. Has a degree in politics, psychology, law and economics from the University of Amsterdam. Now studying law alongside her military training.

Partner She once dated the son of a German millionaire and has joked that German men are "gallant".

Sportiness Plays hockey.

Battle readiness Undertaking military training at Defensity College in Amsterdam.

Fashionability Loves a tiara. "I can recognise all the tiaras in Europe."

Embarrassing relatives Her parents apologised after there was an outcry when the family flew to their Greek holiday home during the Covid pandemic in 2020 and were photographed without masks in a restaurant.

Might say "Orange is the happiest colour."

Unlikely to say "I can feel a pea under the mattress."

Belgium
Princess Elisabeth, Duchess of Brabant

Age 24

Education Sint-Jan Berchmans college in Brussels, a private primary and secondary school. International Baccalaureate at United World College of the Atlantic, Wales. Degree in history and politics from Lincoln College at Oxford University and a master's in public policy from Harvard University (2021-2024).

Partner Rumours of her and Prince George of Liechtenstein dating in 2025 were quashed by the Belgian palace.

Sportiness Rowed at Oxford. Skiing and sailing.

Battle readiness Did full officer military training at Belgium's Royal Military Academy. Photos surfaced of her crawling through mud in full camouflage with a tactical assault rifle, participating in intense field exercises.

Fashion "The Elisabeth effect", when fans of her style rush out to buy the outfits she appears in, has led to comparisons with the Princess of Wales.

Embarrassing relatives Last month the King's brother, Prince Laurent, legally recognised a 26-year-old former car salesman Clément Vandenkerckhove as his son and heir, the result of a relationship with a Belgian singer, Wendy Van Wanten.

Might say "Cut the waffle."

Probably won't say "It's going to be a new Elisabethan age."

arts

ILSE BUHS/DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON

‘I went to school to rebel against my mother’

As the piano icon Martha Argerich plays the Proms, her daughter Annie talks about growing up with an ‘extraterrestrial genius’. By Richard Morrison

There is a startling moment in *Bloody Daughter*, the documentary film that Stéphanie Argerich made in 2012 about her mother, Martha Argerich. “Sometimes I wonder, what if I haven’t spent my whole life following my mother,” Stéphanie tells the viewer, “struggling against the hold she has on me, so soft and yet so paralysing.”

Many children of great performers and artists must feel something similar: inspired yet trapped by such close proximity to genius. But in Martha’s case, the weirdness and extraordinary complications of her life surely added extra layers of confusion for her three daughters when they were growing up.

To the classical music world Martha is indisputably one of the finest pianists of our age, indeed of any age. When The Times asked a dozen eminent pianists to rank the top pianists in recorded history she was the only living performer in the top ten and the only female.

Born in Argentina, she blazed onto the international scene in the Sixties — beautiful, ferociously virtuosic, volatile and mesmerisingly enigmatic (even her famous cancellations seem to add a layer of mystery to her). She dazzled audiences everywhere and at 85 continues to do so, having undergone years of treatment for cancer from the 1990s onwards.

This weekend she is scheduled to play Beethoven’s Second Piano Concerto at the Proms. The Royal Albert Hall will be packed to the rafters. As André Previn once said to me, any Argerich performance “passes all human understanding”.

But so, in a rather more earthy way, does her endlessly entangled home life. Her three daughters each have different musician fathers, who have complicated private lives themselves. The London-based pianist Stephen Kovacevich, Stéphanie’s father (though, as she pointedly observes in *Bloody Daughter*, his name doesn’t appear on her birth certificate), has

> **It was a bit like being in the court of Louis XIV**

three children by two different women. The conductor Charles Dutoit, father of the middle daughter Annie, is on his fourth marriage (Martha was his second wife). The oldest of Martha’s daughters, Lyda — the result of her first marriage, dissolved after a few months, to the conductor Robert Chen — was (as Martha admits) virtually abandoned by her mother, brought up in foster homes, then kidnapped by Martha’s mother, before being finally returned to her father following legal proceedings.

Much of that traumatic family history is laid out in Stéphanie’s documentary. But now her sister Annie Dutoit-Argerich is going public with her memories of growing up with her brilliant mother.

Annie — who at 55 is a distinguished US-based academic and performer — is the co-writer of *Martha*, a new documentary film about her mother by the director Martin Mirabel, which premieres next month. Is it a riposte to her sister’s earlier film?

“For me it was very difficult to watch her movie the first time, to tell you the truth,” Annie says. “It was Stéphanie’s take on her childhood, not mine. For one thing, my mother had a very different relationship with each of our fathers. Stéphanie didn’t see much of her father [Kovacevich] at all. I had a more balanced relationship with my parents, even though they divorced when I was three.”

What was it like growing up in the bohemian entourage surrounding Martha? “A bit like growing up, I imagine, in the court of Louis XIV,” Annie replies. “Now, as an adult, I realise that the dynamic around my mother was not normal. The French have a word, *malsain*, meaning when things aren’t transparent and people aren’t nice for the right reasons. It’s where people want to know you, to be your friend, only because you are the daughter of someone very important. I didn’t realise that at the time and I think my mother didn’t want me to. She said to us that we, her kids, were the only ones who saw her as a human being. Everyone else saw her just as the pianist.”

Top: Martha Argerich in 1967. Below: with her daughter Annie

The daughters certainly witnessed the vulnerable side that Martha has largely kept hidden in public. When Martha broke up with the French pianist Michel Beroff, Stéphanie tells us in *Bloody Daughter*, she went into a “severe depression” and wept for hours. “She told us kids everything about the relationship, without any kind of filter.”

Annie agrees that her childhood was, well, definitely not routine. “We never lived just with my mother. She gathered around her a kind of commune, all sorts of people coming and going at all hours. My mother hated the idea of living some normal, bourgeois existence. She would practise the piano all night. I used to wake up in the morning just as she went to bed. But I can understand all that. She was trying to be a mother while always having to turn up in public as Martha Argerich, the great pianist. It must have been a terribly hard balancing act, especially in that era.

“And because she grew up as a prodigy child, with everything focused on the piano, she never attended school herself so she didn’t want us to go to school either. I went to school almost as a rebellion against her. It was my father [Dutoit] who encouraged me to get good grades, study Latin and Greek, and eventually pushed me to get into Princeton.

“My mother was this extraterrestrial genius but my father was the real anchor in my life. So in a way it was a very good balance between the two. I don’t like to generalise about nationalities but the fact is that he is very Swiss — very structured, always planning ahead — and my mother is very Argentinian: chaotic and spontaneous.”

Yet in recent times Dutoit has turned out to be the more wayward of the two. Facing numerous accusations of sexual harassment from women musicians and others over many years (he denies the allegations), he resigned in 2018 as principal conductor of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and was declared persona non grata by many other European and US orchestras.

“Of course he has been very upset by all the accusations, and professionally it changed everything for him, but he’s very resilient, my dad,” Annie says. “He’s 90 this year, in amazing shape, and still working where he can. In fact he’s just conducted the Chinese premiere of Berg’s *Wozzeck*.

“And my mother has been unbelievably supportive of him as well, which has helped us all get through what was a big family crisis. In fact their beautiful relationship, which has survived through almost 70 years, is one reason why I wanted to make this documentary.

“They first met in the late 1950s. He was conducting his first professional concert aged 21, and she was the piano soloist, aged 17. She learnt the Ravel Piano Concerto in G especially for him — there’s a recording that’s still available. They stayed as friends and about ten years later, when neither of them happened to have someone else in their lives, they got together — and here I am.”

Yet the marriage lasted only four years. “Yes, but that wasn’t because they didn’t get along,” Annie says. “They just couldn’t live together. They remained the closest of friends. In fact the day they divorced they went to a movie together. That’s my mother all over. For her, friendship is the number one thing in a relationship. That’s had an effect on me too. I have always looked for someone I could divorce well!”

Annie now occasionally performs with her mother, as the narrator in Saint-Saëns’s *Carnival of the Animals* (two UK performances with the Oxford Philharmonic are scheduled for February, using Annie’s own updated narration).

“One of the things I like about the piece is that the original text declares the most exotic animal on display to be the pianist,” she says. “And that’s exactly how my mother has always seemed to me: a strange, exotic animal.”

Martha Argerich plays at the BBC Proms at the Royal Albert Hall (and live on BBC Radio 3) on Sat. Her performances with the Oxford Philharmonic are on Feb 12 (Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford) and Feb 14 (Barbican, London)

Join the Q for my insider show about how to be a British spy

Ex-spook Matthew Dunn's new show will require the audience to foil a terrorist plot, he tells Stephen Smith

DANJAQ/EON/UA/KOBAL/SHUTTERSTOCK; PAWEL SPOLNICKI

Desmond Llewelyn as Q and Roger Moore as James Bond in Moonraker. Below: Matthew Dunn

You go out for a nice evening at the theatre but find yourself caught up in a life-and-death security operation, being bossed around by an ex-MI6 agent. The fate of innocent people depends on what you do next. It might not sound like everyone's idea of a fun night out but the former spook Matthew Dunn (he says it's his real name) hopes to turn it into a West End hit.

Operation MI6 is an interactive show in which the audience try to foil a fictional terrorist plot against the clock. The stalls and dress circle become an ops nerve centre as Dunn and his team run footage including CCTV and drone shots to help the audience thwart the bad guys. It's the latest project by Dunn, a 57-year-old ex-spy who has already parlayed his inside knowledge of the espionage business into more than a dozen novels.

Dunn lives in Stratford-upon-Avon, has two grown-up children and spent many years working undercover around the world for MI6 confronting "hard targets in the highest echelons of rogue states" such as Iran or Russia.

Any saloon bar fantasist can pass himself off as a spy. So I ask him, how do we know you're kosher? "You're absolutely right, I can't prove it," he says. "I signed the Official Secrets Act when I joined the service and I'm still bound by that." He says that the publishers of his novels approached senior intelligence officials to confirm his bona fides before putting the thrillers on the market. ITN, Sky and GMB book him to discuss intelligence matters.

How has he been permitted to make a media career out of his spying background? The security services took exception to Peter Wright's memoir of working for MI5, *Spycatcher*, which was banned in England when it came out in 1987. But Dunn's work is fiction, he points out. "I had a meeting with a director of MI6 in 2011 before I began publishing my novels... The attitude of the service was, 'We're here to help. We just want sight of what you write beforehand.' So I got clearances."

Operation MI6 opens at the Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton, next month before touring, with plans for a West End run next year. Theatres will be transformed into a mock-up MI6 command centre. A huge screen will show the audience what purports to be the build-up to an assassination attempt on a VIP in Prague. "The consequences of this scenario are going to be severe for the whole of Europe, especially the big powers like the UK, France and Germany."

But why set the action in Prague — was it too sensitive to locate it in London or another UK city? "That was a consideration. But I want the audience to see what MI6 does, and they're a global operation active overseas. If we set it here, it would be MI5's problem... The question we pose to the audience from the outset is, 'What would you do?' I'll ask them about what they've just seen and they have to select an answer through multiple choice."

Are the options (a) send in the SAS, (b) get the hell out of there or (c) move Andy Burnham to Lerwick? "Something like that," Dunn replies. "Of course, we expect some people will say, 'Blow the bastards up!' But I want to contextualise what the audience are seeing. I want to tell people they know more than they think they do."

Despite his time in the world of James Bond, Dunn is sceptical about gadgets. "They really did have a Q department at MI6! I don't know if we had the name first or took it from the Bond films. They were brilliant boffins who were always proud to show off some new secret recording device or implement for picking locks. We would trial these things in head office and they'd work brilliantly. But in reality if you have an important face-to-face encounter with someone, it's not just about taping their words, you have to focus on the person, pick up every nuance. And you need the gadget to work — nine times out of ten they didn't in the field and that was a tremendous frustration."

> "MI6 had a Q office — nine times out of ten the gadgets didn't work

Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton, Sep 24; then touring the UK

From an early age, Dunn had "a fire in my belly and a massive curiosity about the world". He was enthralled by the film *The Day of the Jackal* starring Edward Fox as an assassin targeting President de Gaulle of France. "He was a sophisticated gentleman called to do a very precise operation," Dunn says. He also loved the spy stories of Ian Fleming and John le Carré.

He studied politics and economics at the University of East Anglia before taking a PhD in international relations at Cambridge. He confided to a sympathetic professor that he had an interest in "foreign service". He was approached by MI6, joining in 1996. He entered an "Oxbridge, public school, Etonian" milieu that would have been very familiar to Bond's creator, Fleming, who served in naval intelligence during the war. "They were training world-class spies, though they never used the word 'spy'. There was no sense of, 'OK, books open!' — it was role-playing, quite fun. Then they began to ratchet it up, it became intense. On our final exercise everybody said they no longer knew if it was an exercise or not."

Dunn was posted abroad with a brief to "turn" people of interest who could help the British cause, to run agents and gather intelligence. He had as many as 14 aliases. What was his typical cover story? "My forté was as a businessperson. I'm 6ft 4in so I was never going to be the grey man in the shadows. So I played it up as a larger-than-life chief executive. It worked very well." Did it get hairy at times? "Was my life in danger? 100 per cent. I look back and I think, 'Blimey!'

"I have been in more than one situation when I have had to extricate not just from a specific location but the broader environs... I don't say this with any sense of ego or machismo but at the time I did not have what I would describe as fear, even though I was in situations that on paper were bonkers. I've thought about it and, looking back, everything was about trying to succeed with the operation. And the other component was the aliases. I was very comfortable not being me."

Dunn expects that a few old comrades from the service will take their seats in the darkness to watch his show about the spying game. "I would be mortified if they didn't! I'm very onside with the service and have no axe to grind. I hope they'll approve of us showing the complexities of what they do and the moral grey zones."

times2

Your weekday brain boost

More puzzles Pages 14-16

Every day, Monday to Thursday, a page of extra puzzles to give your brain an extended workout

Samurai medium

Fill each grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Where the puzzles overlap, the rows and columns do not go beyond their usual length.

	9		3			4		1
				7	2			
	2			9				8
9				1	3	8	7	
		6				1		
	8	1	4	2				5
1				4				
			2	3				
7		8			6			

			7					
						7	9	
1	9			6	4		9	8
		4	7					
5	7	2	3		9	1	4	6
				5		8		
			6	5			7	8
		1			9			
				9				

						4	6	
				7		8	7	
				2	6	2	7	4
						8		
						4		
						7		

		7				4		
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2	5		4	9			1	
		2	3					
6	3	4	8		5	2	5	
	1		7	5			2	9
3	2	9	4		2			

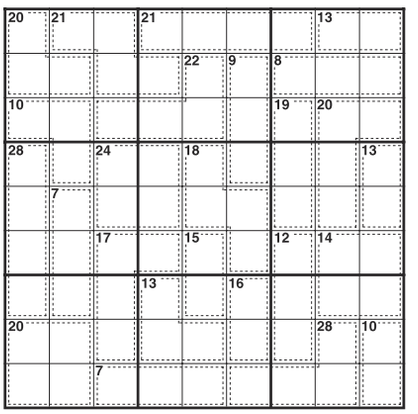
			3			2		1
				1			7	6
						8		
9			1	3		5	2	
		2				1		
9	4			8	5			6
4			3				5	
				5	2			
5		3			9		1	

Sudoku difficult

				3		7		
			6		5		3	8
								2
	1							7
					7	3	9	1
4	3			1		5		
1					5	4		
	8				7		2	
	4	6	8	9				

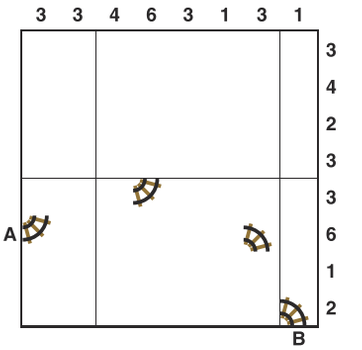
Killer deadly

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.



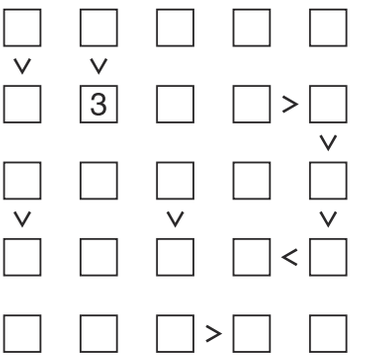
Train Tracks

Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of track go in each row and column. There are only straight sections and curved sections. The track cannot cross itself.

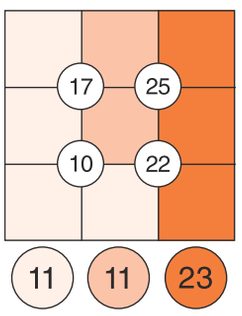


Futoshiki

Fill the blank squares so that every row and column contains each of the numbers 1 to 5 once only. The symbols between the squares indicate whether a number is larger (>) or smaller (<) than the number next to it.



Sakuro



Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each colour total is correct

Play Mini Sudoku every day Monday-Sunday online at thetimes.com and on Live app

Codeword

Every letter in the crossword-style grid, right, is represented by a number from 1 to 26. Each letter of the alphabet appears in the grid at least once. Use the letters already provided to work out the identity of further letters. Enter letters in the main grid and the smaller reference grid until all 26 letters of the alphabet have been accounted for. Proper nouns are excluded.

Mini Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x2 box contains the digits 1 to 6

Solutions in Monday's Times2

	1			5	
5					4
		6	5		
		5	3		
3					5
	5			1	

Yesterday's solutions

SAMURAI

7	6	3	2	8	9	1	5	4
9	2	8	1	5	4	6	7	3
5	4	1	3	7	6	8	2	9
4	8	2	6	3	5	7	9	1
3	9	7	4	2	1	5	6	8
6	1	5	7	9	8	3	4	2
2	3	9	5	1	7	4	8	6
8	7	4	9	6	3	2	1	5
1	5	6	8	4	2	9	3	7

5	4	8	1	2	9	3	7	6
1	6	2	4	3	7	5	8	9
9	7	3	6	8	5	4	2	1
6	8	9	3	4	2	7	1	5
7	3	1	8	5	6	9	4	2
4	2	5	7	9	1	6	3	8
3	9	1	2	5	7	8	6	4
8	4	6	9	7	3	2	5	1
2	5	7	5	1	4	3	9	7

5	9	1	2	7	6	8	4	3
4	8	3	9	5	1	2	7	6
2	7	6	4	3	8	5	9	1
8	2	9	5	1	7	6	3	4
3	1	7	6	8	4	9	2	5
6	5	4	3	9	2	1	8	7
9	3	5	1	6	4	7	5	2
1	6	2	8	4	5	3	1	9
7	4	8	7	2	9	4	6	8

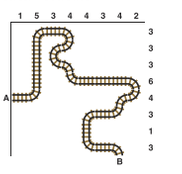
4	5	7	1	3	8	6	2	9
8	6	2	9	4	7	3	5	1
9	3	1	5	2	6	4	8	7
1	7	4	8	6	3	9	2	5
5	2	8	4	9	1	7	3	6
6	9	3	7	5	2	1	4	8
2	8	5	6	1	4	3	9	7
3	4	9	2	7	5	8	6	1
7	1	6	3	8	9	5	7	4

SAKURO

MINI SUDOKU

3	4	2	6	1	5
1	5	6	3	4	2
6	3	1	2	5	4
4	2	5	1	6	3
5	1	3	4	2	6
2	6	4	5	3	1

TRAIN TRACKS



FUTOSHIKI

3	5	1	2	4
2	3	5	4	1
4	2	3	1	5
1	4	2	5	3
5	1	4	3	2

SUDOKU

5	1	4	8	3	9	7	6	2
8	7	9	6	5	2	3	4	1
6	3	2	4	7	1	9	5	8
3	4	6	2	1	8	5	9	7
9	2	7	3	6	5	8	1	4
1	8	5	9	4	7	2	3	6
4	6	8	5	2	3	1	7	9
7	9	3	1	8	4	6	2	5
2	5	1	7	9	6	4	8	3

KILLER

5	4	6	1	2	7	8	9	3
7	8	2	3	9	5	1	6	4
9	3	1	4	8	6	7	2	5
8	1	5	2	4	3	6	7	9
2	7	3	6	1	9	4	5	8
4	6	9	5	7	8	2	3	1
3	5	7	8	6	1	9	4	2
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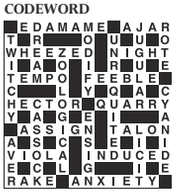
6	2	8	9	5	4	3	1	7

CODEWORD



Lock, stock and a barrelful of Ritchie clichés

Ben Dowell TV review

The Gentlemen
Netflix
★★★☆☆

Pull! Yes, it's shotgun and Barbour time again as plastic gangster-loving Guy Ritchie's hugely popular geezerish drama *The Gentlemen* returns to Netflix with all the subtlety of a Beretta blast to the face.

It's still a fantasy world of kedgeree breakfasts and plus-fours for much of the time, but Ritchie and his co-writer Matthew Read have collected their air miles, washing up in the opener on the sun-dappled shores of Lake Maggiore as aristocratic wrong'un Eddie (Theo James) and his sidekick Susie (Kaya Scodelario) discover that a continental expansion of their marijuana business has attracted unwelcome mafia interest.

You continue to sense that Ritchie is keen for the show, which started as a 2019 film of the same name, to serve as a meaningful fable of Eddie's moral descent. There is a bit of Christian theology thrown in later, along with some folklore elements, when Susie's imprisoned dad, Ray Winstone's growly kingpin Bobby Glass, communes with a mythical being in a lakeside sauna. But this is a show far too in love with carnage, wisecracks, lavish cinematography and fast editing to hold on to any depth or seriousness for too long. You come to this for chases, showdowns and more baroque deaths than you can shake a shooting stick at (you just know that when a tiger is introduced in episode one it will be lunching on human flesh before the credits roll).

There's a lot of decent trash on telly these days and it is possible to regard this in the same light if you harbour a nostalgic fondness for the Ritchie gangster formula, which started in 1998 with *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* and made an unlikely star of Vinnie Jones, back as loyal gamekeeper Geoff. You also have to enjoy what constitutes a Ritchie joke, which isn't, as you may be tempted to think, convincing the world that the former Wimbledon FC midfielder is a decent actor. No, it's a shooting scene where the idiotic Italian Cico's skills are shown up by Eddie and he bellows: "I don't understand how the f*** he gets all the birds."

MATTHEW TOWERS/NETFLIX

Theo James returns as aristocratic gangster Eddie Horniman

Another gag is casting Hugh Bonneville, erstwhile Lord Grantham from *Downton Abbey*, as a fruity toff called Lord Hawthorne, who can be corrupted for a few thousand quid and a night of slap and tickle with Susie's brother, Jack. Deploying Giancarlo Esposito, *Breaking Bad*'s gay gangster Gus Fring, as Stanley Johnston, another meth magnate with a delicate sensibility is also clearly a joke. But while Vince Gilligan's masterpiece used Fring's sexuality to give his terrifying villain a humanising root, Ritchie's creative bar is set slightly lower. "Uncle Stan", who is actually straight, just loves good wine.

It's Cockneys nice, everyone else a pretty rum lot. Now it's the Italians' turn, with vulgar Cico happening upon Eddie's estate with a beautiful girlfriend and the foolish idea that he can get one over on His Grace. But our man, a hard-nut soldier with an Oxford degree and model good looks, is rarely bested and there's fun to be had watching him win. But beyond that? While some have seen James's role as a timely Bond audition, I worry that this show's crashing lack of sophistication will actually shake rather than stir his chances.

Radio choice

Norman Day
Radio 4, from 6am

To mark the opening of the display of the Bayeux Tapestry at the British Museum on September 10, Radio 4 dedicates a day to the Norman Conquest and its legacy. There's a themed *Today* (6am) and *What Did the Normans Ever Do for Us?* (9am), hosted by Katie Razzall, *above*, with guests including Eleanor Parker, Muriel Zagha and Kate Mosse. *Drama on 4* (2.15pm) is *Edith Swan-Neck and the Bayeux Tapestry* starring Hattie Morahan in a play about the creation of the piece. *Illuminated* (4.30pm) has George Parker exploring the political power of the work, with contributors including Chris Bryant and George Osborne. ***Clair Woodward***

Times Radio

Digital, web, smart speaker, app

5.00am Tom Nunan with Early Breakfast **6.00** Kate McCann and Stig Abell with Breakfast **10.00** Hugo Rifkind **1.00pm** Jo Coburn **2.00** Jane Garvey and Fi Glover **4.00** John Pienaar with Drive **7.00** The Evening Edition with Kait Borsay **10.00** Henry Bonsu **1.00am** The Best of Times Radio

Radio 2

FM: 88-90.2 MHz

6.30am The Sara Cox Breakfast Show **9.30** Vernon Kay **12.00** TIna Daheley **2.00pm** DJ Spoony **4.00** Drivetime **7.00** Jo Whiley **9.00** The Country Show **10.00** Good Groove with Melvin Odoom **12.00** OJ Borg **3.00am** Tony Blackburn's Sounds of Soul (r) **4.00** Jason Mohammad

Radio 3

FM: 90.2-92.4 MHz

6.30am Breakfast
9.30 Essential Classics
1.00pm Classical Live
Linton Stephens introduces music from the BBC Proms, BBC Young Musician and the International Baroque Festival in Beaune.
BBC Young Musician — Johann Strauss/Schulz-Evler (*Arabesque on Themes from the Beautiful Blue Danube*); International Baroque Festival, Beaune — Leo (*Salve Regina*); BBC Young Musician — Schubert (Impromptu in E-flat D899 No 2); BBC Proms — Prokofiev (*Romeo and Juliet* — excerpts); BBC Young Musician — Mussorgsky (*Pictures at an Exhibition*); International Baroque Festival, Beaune — Durante (Concerto for Strings No. 5); and BBC Proms — Stravinsky (Violin Concerto)
4.00 Composer of the Week: Élisabeth Jacquet de La Guerre (1665-1729)
Kate Molleson examines the composer's sonatas (r)
5.00 In Tune
7.00 Live BBC Proms 2026
Kirill Petrenko conducts the Berlin Philharmonic in Scriabin, and Beethoven with soloist Augustin Hadelich. Presented by Kate Molleson, live from the Royal Albert Hall. Beethoven (Violin Concerto in D); and Scriabin (Symphony No. 3 in C minor, "*The Divine Poem*")
10.00 Night Tracks
11.30 'Round Midnight
Music by Lydian Collective, Venna and Dave Holland
12.30am Through the Night

Radio 4

FM: 92.4-94.6 MHz

5.00am News Summary
5.04 Yesterday in Parliament
5.34 Shipping Forecast
5.43 Prayer for the Day
5.45 Farming Today
6.00 Today
9.00 Choice What Did the Normans Ever Do For Us?
Katie Razzall asks why the Norman Conquest still matters
10.00 Woman's Hour
Magazine presented by Anita Rani
11.00 The Food Programme
How the Norman Conquest influenced the food of Britain
11.45 King Harold Writes Back
Historian Michael Wood recounts his personal relationship with the Norman Conquest
12.04pm Scam Secrets
A look at e-mail security (6/8)
12.32 Dough
How weightloss jabs could be making gyms less relevant (2/5)
1.00 The World at One
1.45 A 9/11 Story
The hijackers' neighbour from San Diego is questioned (4/10)
2.00 The Archers (r)
2.15 Drama: Edith Swan-Neck and The Bayeux Tapestry
By Jonathan Myerson
3.00 Open Country
Witnessing a cricket match on a sandbank in the Solent (3/7)
3.27 Radio 4 Appeal (r)
3.30 Word of Mouth
Michael Rosen explores the impact of the Norman invasion on the English language (2/6)
4.00 You're Dead to Me
The Battle of Hastings (11/14)
4.30 The Power of the Bayeux Tapestry
Exploring the political history of the Bayeux Tapestry
5.00 PM
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.30 Icklewick FM
The people of Icklewick are seduced by bloodthirsty bigot, Sharon L'Beech (6/6) (r)
7.00 The Archers
George finds himself in trouble
7.15 Front Row
Arts programme
8.00 NatureBang
Becky Ripley and Emily Knight take it to the river (2/5) (r)
8.15 The Media Show
The latest news from the fast-changing media world (r)
9.00 Loose Ends
From the Edinburgh Festivals (r)
9.45 The Cows Are Mad
A look at the grisliest theory about BSE's origins so far (9/10) (r)
10.00 The World Tonight
10.45 Book at Bedtime:
A Working Mother
By Agnes Owens (4/5)
11.00 Radical
Conversations about the global forces reshaping the world
11.30 Today in Parliament
12.00 News and Weather
12.30am You Do Not Have to Say Anything (4/10) (r)
12.48 Shipping Forecast
1.00 As BBC World Service

Radio 4 Extra

Digital only

8.00am The Train at Platform 4 **8.30** Flush **8.45** The Offing **9.00** Icklewick FM **9.30** The Secret History of a School **9.45** Daily Service **10.00** Great Lives **10.30** Camel Country **11.00** To Serve Them All My Days **11.45** The Outside Child **12.00** Legal, Decent, Honest and Truthful **12.30pm** The Burkiss Way **1.00** The Train at Platform 4 **1.30** Flush **1.45** The Offing **2.00** Dilemma **2.30** Snap **3.00** Mr Betjeman's Class **3.45** Short Works **4.00** Great Lives **4.30** Camel Country **5.00** To Serve Them All My Days **5.45** The Outside Child **6.00** Legal, Decent, Honest and Truthful **6.30** The Burkiss Way **7.00** The Train at Platform 4 **7.30** Flush **7.45** The Offing **8.00** Dilemma **8.30** Snap **9.00** Mr Betjeman's Class **9.45** Short Works **10.00** Comedy Club: Icklewick FM **10.30** A Look Back at the Nineties **11.00** Hearing with Hegley **11.15** Irish Micks and Legends **11.30** Rigor Mortis

Radio 5 Live

MW: 693, 909

5.00am Wake Up to Money **6.00** 5 Live Breakfast **9.00** Nicky Campbell **11.00** Adrian Chiles **2.00pm** Matt Chorley **4.00** 5 Live Drive **7.00** 5 Live Sport **7.30** 5 Live Sport **8.30** 5 Live Formula 1 **9.00** 5 Live Sport: The Euro Leagues Podcast **10.00** Gordon Smart **1.00am** Joel Mitchell

talkSPORT

MW: 1053, 1089 kHz

5.00am Early Sports Breakfast **6.00** Breakfast with Alan Brazil **10.00** Jim White and Simon Jordan **1.00pm** Hawksbee and Baker **4.00** talkSPORT Drive **7.00** Kick Off **10.00** The Sports Bar **1.00am** Extra Time with Paul Ross

Talk

Digital only

6.00am Jeremy Kyle **10.00** Julia Hartley Brewer **1.00pm** Ian Collins **4.00** Kevin O'Sullivan **7.00** Peter Cardwell **10.00** Andre Walker ft. Ash **1.00am** Paul Ross

6 Music

Digital only

5.00am Amy Lamé **7.00** Nemone **10.00** Lauren Laverne **1.00pm** Craig Charles **4.00** Huw Stephens **7.00** New Music Fix Daily **9.00** Riley & Coe **11.00** 6 Music Artist in Residence **12.00** New Music Fix Playlist **1.00am** New Album Fix **2.00** 6 Music's Jukebox **3.00** 6 Music's 90s Forever **4.00** 6 Music's 00s Forever

Virgin Radio

Digital only

6.30am The Chris Evans Breakfast Show **10.00** Emma B **2.00pm** Ben Jones **6.00** Geoff Lloyd **10.00** Goldierocks **2.00am** Steve Denyer

Classic FM

FM: 100-102 MHz

6.30am Dan Walker **9.00** The Hall of Fame Hour **10.00** Aled Jones **1.00pm** Anne-Marie Minhall **4.00** Margherita Taylor **7.00** Relaxing Evenings with Zeb Soanes **10.00** Calm Classics **1.00am** Bill Overton **4.00** Early Breakfast

television

PICKS OF THE DAY

Taskmaster
Channel 4, 9pm

The quintet of comedy contestants taking part in the 22nd series of "Little" Alex Horne's game show (a "penal facility for the makers of hilarity", according to the Taskmaster, Greg Davies) are Richard Ayoade, Matt Lucas, Nina Conti, Isy Suttie and Chloe Petts. It's a quality line-up and they do not disappoint, with Ayoade's pedantic nerdiness and seeming contempt for the format delivering maximum laughs. In a task that requires the contestants to be handcuffed to Horne while searching for a golden apple (the series has an ancient Greek theme), Ayoade asks Horne to attach himself to his foot, which is great for fans of slapstick, but not so good for completing the task. They also try their hand at moving furniture and perform duets... with themselves. Lovely stuff. **Joe Clay**

Isy Suttie, Matt Lucas and Nina Conti on Taskmaster series 22

Long Lost Family
ITV1, 9pm

Nicky Campbell and Davina McCall's main series begins its 16th run, following a summer outing for its spin-off about foundlings, *Born Without Trace*. As its subjects' mothers parted with them as newborns, the latter show is a good preparation for tonight's episode, since one of the two searchers experienced the same separation from the other side. Avril, 77, from Newcastle, was a pregnant schoolgirl in 1964 and gave her child up for adoption after having her in a mother and baby home. Since then she has spent six decades hunting for her lost daughter, with hopes now pinned on *Long Lost Family*'s researchers. Also featured is Marie from Norfolk, who lost contact with her father as a child and wants to trace him. Spoilers are forbidden, but let's say both make progress — and in one story there's what McCall calls "a mad coincidence". **John Dugdale**

BBC1

6.00am Breakfast
9.30 Morning Live
10.45 Rip Off Britain
11.30 Homes Under the Hammer (r) (AD)
12.15pm Bargain Hunt (r) (AD)
1.00 BBC News at One; Weather
1.35 BBC Regional News; Weather
1.45 BBC News at One; Weather
2.00 Money for Nothing. A furniture artist is tasked with saving a tired headboard
2.45 Escape to the Country. A retired couple want to move to Herefordshire (r)
3.45 Garden Rescue. Flo Headlam and Chris Hull create a colourful garden with a Moroccan influence in Wells, Somerset (r)
4.30 The Answer Run. Jason Manford hosts the fast-paced quiz where three couples face a series of questions which hurtle down the Answer Run towards them (r)
5.15 Pointless. Quiz hosted by Alexander Armstrong and Susan Wokoma
6.00 BBC News at Six; Weather
6.30 BBC Regional News; Weather

7.00 The One Show Presented by Alex Jones and Clara Amfo

7.30 EastEnders The men of Walford gather in Harry's Barn for Max and Howie's stag party (AD)

8.00 Dragons' Den The Dragons hear pitches for alcohol-liberated wine, music events with social enterprise at their core, a new retail venue and all-natural plant-based ice cream. *See picks of the day*

9.00 Ludwig Disobeying station rules, John visits the Cambridge Police Authority, hoping to find intel for Lucy's upcoming assignment. But keeping a low profile proves difficult when he finds himself unable to resist consulting on the murder of an influencer (3/6) (AD)

10.00 BBC News at Ten

10.30 BBC Regional News and Weather

10.40 FILM: Creed II (12, 2018) Under the guidance of boxing legend Rocky Balboa, newly crowned heavyweight champion Adonis Creed faces off against Viktor, the son of Ivan Drago, whom his mentor fought in the 1980s. Drama starring Michael B Jordan, Sylvester Stallone and Tessa Thompson. *See film choice*

12.40am The Repair Shop: Beyond the Barn The experts visit some of the people who have been reunited with cherished mementos. Including the story of a well-worn cowboy hat worn by the musician John Cambridge, who played alongside David Bowie (r) (AD) **1.45-6.00** BBC News

BBC2

6.30am Garden Rescue (r)
7.15 Money for Nothing (r)
8.00 Sign Zone: Gardeners' World (r) (AD, SL)
9.00 BBC News
12.15pm Politics Live
1.00 Richard Osman's House of Games (r)
1.30 The Edge. Game show (r)
2.15 Weatherman Walking. In Dinas Powys to walk the Salmon Leaps circular trail (r)
2.45 Animal Park Summer. Staff risk injury as they tend to a giraffe (r) (AD)
3.30 Dogs in the Wild: Meet the Family. Chris Packham narrates look at wild dogs' secrets to success (r) (AD)
4.30 Vintage Antiques Roadshow. From Abergavenny. First shown in 2003 (r)
5.15 Flog It! From Ushaw in Co Durham (r)
6.00 Richard Osman's House of Games. With Ken Bruce, Alice Roberts, Perri Shakes-Drayton and Kiell Smith-Bynoe (r)
6.30 Great British Railway Journeys. Michael Portillo travels from Gatwick Airport to Royal Tunbridge Wells (r) (AD)

7.00 Escape to the Country Armed with a healthy budget of £450,000, Jules Hudson property shops with a couple wanting to make a permanent move from Kent to the scenic East Riding of Yorkshire. They are in search of a house with space for a burgeoning catering business (r)

8.00 The Big Deal with Steph McGovern The contestants are split into teams with one half travelling to Berlin to liaise with trailblazing artists, while the rest stay in London to prepare for a global online auction (4/6) (AD)

9.00 A House Through Time The final episode follows the Ruggs, who were witnesses to the first German attack on mainland Britain, in October 1939. The spotlight also falls on the Shiels family, whose grandchildren show David a treasure trove of family letters. Last in the series (AD)

10.00 Red Dwarf Rimmer forces the crew into 12 weeks of quarantine. Originally broadcast in 1992 (4/6) (r)

10.30 Newsnight Headline analysis presented by Paddy O'Connell

11.05 Emergency 24/7 A pensioner arrives with life-threatening burns after his shed explodes, and a young father with a brain clot needs an urgent specialist procedure (3/6) (r) (AD)

12.05am FILM: Respect (12, 2021) After singing in her father's church's choir, gifted vocalist Aretha Franklin copes with the highs and lows of international fame, and also endures an abusive marriage. Drama with Jennifer Hudson and Forest Whitaker (AD) **2.25-3.20** Sign Zone: Vigil (r) (AD, SL)

ITV1

6.00am Good Morning Britain
10.00 This Morning
1.30pm ITV News; Weather
2.00 Dickinson's Real Deal. In Nottingham's Albert Hall, David Dickinson and his dealers set up stall, where Henry Nicholls flexes his spending muscles on a collection of hero comics, and Tim Hogarth struggles to seal a deal on a "blingy" signet ring (r) (AD)
3.00 Deal or No Deal. Stephen Mulhern hosts the game show as a contestant tries to open the 22 boxes in the right order for the chance to win a cash prize (r) (AD)
4.00 Tipping Point. Ben Shephard hosts the arcade-themed quiz in which contestants drop tokens down a choice of four chutes in the hope of winning a £10,000 jackpot (r)
5.00 The Chase. Bradley Walsh presents the quiz show as contestants from Glasgow, Abingdon, London and Birmingham take on one of the ruthless Chasers (r)
6.00 Regional News; Weather
6.30 ITV News; Weather

7.30 Millionaire Hot Seat Jeremy Clarkson hosts the quiz show where each episode sees six hopefuls compete for £1 million

8.00 Emmerdale Bear talks to Sarah. Meanwhile, Nicola is mortified and Kim is concerned (AD)

8.30 Coronation Street Debbie experiences a brush with the past on a visit to the salon (AD)

9.00 Long Lost Family New series. Davina McCall and Nicky Campbell look at the cases of a woman who was 15 when she placed her daughter for adoption, and is dreaming of finally seeing her again, and a woman who was raised by her grandparents. *See picks of the day* (AD)

10.00 ITV News at Ten; Weather; followed by Regional News

10.45 Regional Programme

11.15 Unbelievable Moments Caught on Camera A Miami real-estate agent rescues a woman from alligators and a group of British tourists almost drown in Egypt when their luxury yacht capsizes (r) (AD)

12.10am Shop on TV 3.00 The Staircase. Kathleen prepares for a Christmas to remember in 2001, while years later, Sophie continues her quest to prove Michael's innocence (r) (AD, SL) **4.05** Unwind with ITV **5.05-6.00** The Chase Around the World. Bradley Walsh hosts (r) (AD, SL)

Channel 4

6.30am The King of Queens (r) (AD)
7.45 Everybody Loves Raymond (r) (AD)
9.10 Frasier (r) (AD)
11.10 Ramsay's 24 Hours to Hell and Back. The chef is in Sacramento, California (r) (AD)
12.05pm Channel 4 News Summary
12.10 Find It, Fix It, Flog It. Henry Cole finds a miniature Hay Wain to restore (r) (AD)
1.10 The Great House Giveaway. Two strangers pair up to renovate a property in Weston-super-Mare, Somerset (r)
2.10 Countdown. With Zoe Lyons
3.00 A Place in the Sun. A newlywed couple seek a Spanish holiday home near the Mar Menor with a budget of £65,000 (r)
4.00 The Great B&B Challenge. The final hosts move into the B&B to try to impress the judges with their hosting skills (r)
5.00 Château DIY. At the Château de la Fare, a renovation suffers some setbacks (r) (AD)
6.00 A New Life in the Sun: Where Are They Now? In Italy, Nicky looks for a new way to keep her equestrian business trotting along

7.00 Channel 4 News

8.00 Renovation Rescue In Nottinghamshire, a couple have sunk £250,000 into what can only be described as a building site, now they hope to turn chaos into calm (AD)

9.00 Taskmaster New series. Richard Ayoade, Isy Suttie, Matt Lucas, Nina Conti and Chloe Petts take on the comedy challenge, beginning by rearranging furniture and singing duets — with themselves. *See picks of the day* (1/10) (AD)

10.00 Celebrity Gogglebox *Bridgerton*, *Celebrity Bridge of Lies*, *The Sky at Night*, *UK's Strongest Man 2024*, *The World's Most Luxurious Retirement Homes* and *Scam Interceptors* are appraised (2/6) (r) (AD)

11.00 24 Hours in Police Custody: The Ambush The case of a 17-year-old boy who was left critically injured on the roadside after suffering catastrophic head injuries in a suspected hit-and-run (1/2) (r) (AD)

12.15am Crime Scene Cleaners (r) (AD, SL) **1.10** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA (r) (SL) **2.00 FILM: Our Friend (15, 2021)** Fact-based drama starring Dakota Johnson **4.05** Jamie: Eat Yourself Healthy (r) (AD, SL) **5.00** Couples Come Dine with Me (r) **5.50-6.30** Countdown (r)

5

6.00am Milkshake!
9.05 Entertainment News on 5
9.15 Jeremy Vine. Hard-hitting debate
11.30 Storm & Alexis. Discussion
12.30pm Live Snooker: British Open 2026. Katie Shanahan presents coverage of the afternoon session on day four, held at The Centaur in Cheltenham, featuring third-round matches. Mark Selby continued his defence of the title at this stage last year with a hard-fought 4-3 victory over Joe O'Connor. However, it was eventually Shaun Murphy who succeeded him as champion, and he was in fine form in round three, overcoming Neil Robertson 4-1. With with analysis from Stephen Hendry, Ken Doherty, and Joe Perry
5.30 5 News with Dan Walker
6.25 Car Pound Cops. On the Isle of Skye, the family-run Morar Motors tackle the unusual job of helping a langoustine fisherman move his boat back into open water so that he can start fishing again (r)
6.55 5 News Update

7.00 Cycling: Vuelta a España 2026 Rebecca Charlton presents highlights of stage 12 of the Grand Tour race, a 166.6km mountain route from Vera to Calar Alto

7.55 5 News Update

8.00 The Yorkshire Vet Shona Searson attends to a bull, who has a bad case of sunburn, a 12-foot Burmese python with a serious eye problem arrives at the practice, and Peter Wright treats a film star rooster

9.00 Benidorm Is Murder A farewell party takes a deadly turn during a blackout, as one guest lies dead on the floor, a kitchen knife in his chest. Forced to investigate to clear his name, Dennis reconstructs the blackout second by second. Last in the series (AD)

10.00 Killer at the Crime Scene In North London, a 22-year-old is fatally shot near a playground in a targeted attack. As his family mourns, police uncover a web of gang feuds, revenge, and mistaken identity (r)

11.05 Killed by Our Daughter: The McCullough Murders A look at the case of Virginia McCullough, who murdered her parents, Lois and John, in June 2019 and then lived with their bodies for the next four years (r)

12.20am Street Cops: Catching the Yobs Last in the series (r) **1.20** Entertainment News on 5 **1.30** Cruise TV (r) **2.30** GPs: Behind Closed Doors (r) **3.20** The Highland Vet (r) (SL) **4.15** Yorkshire with Jane McDonald (r) (SL) **5.00** Entertainment News on 5 **5.15-6.00** Children's Shows (r) (AD, SL)

television

Dragons' Den
BBC1, 8pm

What is the risk for would-be entrepreneurs who secure themselves a place in front of the dragons? They may secure investment and hearty claps on the back, but in pitching their business they expose it to ridicule. So it is that Peter Jones meets a pair who have created an "alcohol-liberated" wine. "Like a coffee that's decaffeinated is still a coffee?" he asks. Yes, it's still coffee, they assure him. "It's not really, though," he says, shrugging. **Helen Stewart**

Sandi's Ireland: A Literary Journey
More4, 9pm

Sandi Toksvig is a prolific author, writing numerous novels, memoirs and children's books. She also loves and collects books, so is the perfect, knowledgeable host for this two-part series that explores one of the world's greatest literary cultures. She begins in Dublin, where the author Marian Keyes gives her an insight into why the Irish are such expert storytellers. Toksvig then heads into the countryside to find out about a forgotten female novelist and the landscape that inspired WB Yeats. **JC**

STREAMING CHOICE

The Gentlemen
Netflix

In the first series of Guy Ritchie's action-comedy Eddie (Theo James) inherited a dukedom and cannabis farm and forged an alliance with a drug gang run from a deluxe jail by Bobby (Ray Winstone). In series two their empire will advance into Europe, but first Eddie throws a shooting party to charm Hugh Bonneville's Lord Hawthorne into securing him a "hereditary peerage". That's followed by Eddie and Susie (Kaya Scodelario), Bobby's daughter, buying a Botticelli at a London auction and wooing a mafia boss with it in Italy. *See review, page 11.* **John Dugdale**

FILM CHOICE

Creed II (12, 2018)
BBC1, 10.40pm

Michael B Jordan puts in a nuanced performance as Adonis Creed, the boxing protégé of Rocky (Sylvester Stallone). In a reshuffle of *Rocky IV*, Adonis must fight the Russian hulk Viktor Drago (Florian Munteanu), the son of Ivan Drago (Dolph Lundgren), the blond slugger who, in the 1980s, killed Creed's father in the ring. (130min) **Kevin Maher**

BBC4

7.00pm Fred Dibnah's Building of Britain. The steeplejack visits castles of north Wales (2/6) (AD) **7.30** Villages by the Sea. Exploring the Pembrokeshire village of Porthgain (8/10) **8.00 FILM: The Italian Job (PG, 1969)** A crook plots to steal gold bullion and make a quick getaway in a fleet of Minis. Crime comedy starring Michael Caine (AD) **9.35** Talking Pictures: The Godfather Trilogy. Exploring the story behind Francis Ford Coppola's acclaimed series of films **10.20 FILM: The Godfather (15, 1972)** Gangster drama starring Marlon Brando and Al Pacino (AD) **1.10am** Talking Pictures: 70s Legends Part I **2.00** Talking Pictures: The Godfather Trilogy **2.45** Fred Dibnah's Building of Britain (AD) **3.15-3.45** Villages by the Sea (SL)

Sky Arts

6.00am Nutcracker **7.45** Artist of the Year: Masterclass (AD) **8.45** Tales of the Unexpected **9.55** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **11.00** Discovering **12.00** Classic Albums **1.00pm** Tales of the Unexpected **2.00** The Alfred Hitchcock Hour **3.00** Stories from the National Portrait Gallery **4.00** Discovering **5.00** Portrait Artist of the Year 2024 (AD) **6.00** Tales of the Unexpected **7.00** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **8.00** Discovering: John Hurt (AD) **9.00** Spymasters: The Great Spy Writers. Ian Fleming profile (AD) **10.00** The Myth of Marilyn Monroe **11.00** The Directors. Robert Wise **12.00** Sean Connery vs James Bond (AD) **1.15am** Discovering Romance on Film (AD) **2.45** Art Traffickers (AD) **3.45** National Trust: National Treasures (AD) **5.00am-6.00** Stories from the National Portrait Gallery

More4

8.55am Find It, Fix It, Flog It (AD) **10.00** Four in a Bed **12.40pm** Come Dine with Me **3.20** Four in a Bed **5.55** Car SOS (AD) **7.55** Grand Designs. Kevin McCloud follows the progress of a dual-purpose family and wheelchair-friendly home (3/7) (AD) **9.00** Sandi's Ireland: A Literary Journey. Sandi Toksvig treads in the footsteps of Ireland's literary greats. *See picks of the day* (1/2) (AD) **10.00** 24 Hours in A&E. A 79-year-old woman is airlifted to hospital after being involved in a road traffic collision (2/12) (AD) **11.05** 24 Hours in A&E. A 30-year-old sustains a potentially life-threatening wound during a game with his friend (AD) **12.10am** 999: On the Front Line **1.15** 24 Hours in A&E (AD) **3.25am-3.55** The Perfect Pitch

Live sport today

England's cricket captain Charlie Dean

Live Women's International One-Day Cricket: England v Ireland
Sky Sports Main Event, 12.30pm-3.30, Sky Sports Cricket, Sky Sports Mix, 12.30pm-8.30,
Coverage of the second ODI in the three-match series in Derby

Live DP World Tour Golf
Sky Sports Golf, 12.30pm-5.30
Day one of the Omega European Masters in Crans-Montana, Switzerland

Live European T20 Premier League: Amsterdam Flames v Glasgow Cosmic
TNT Sports 2, 1.45pm-5.30
Coverage from The Hague

Live US Open Tennis
Sky Sports Main Event, Sky Sports +, 3.30pm-12midnight
Coverage of day five of the Grand Slam in New York

Live MLB: Houston Astros v Chicago White Sox
TNT Sports 1, 7pm-10.00
(Start-time **7.10**). Coverage of the American League match comes from Daikin Park

Talking Pictures

6.00am FILM: Rock You Sinners (U, 1958) (b/w) **7.10 FILM: The Strange Woman (PG, 1946)** (b/w) **9.10 FILM: Kiss the Bride Goodbye (PG, 1945)** (b/w) **10.55** Play of the Month: Robinson Crusoe **1.00pm** The Adventures of Sir Lancelot (b/w) **1.30** The Duchess of Duke Street **2.35 FILM: The Durant Affair (U, 1962)** (b/w) **4.00** That's My Boy **4.35 FILM: Conflict of Wings (U, 1954)** Comedy drama **6.20** Strange But True **6.55** The Brothers **8.00** Mark Saber (b/w) **8.30** The Wheeltappers and Shunters Social Club **9.20 FILM: Suspect (15, 1987)** **11.45 FILM: Two Way Stretch (U, 1960)** (b/w) **1.30am FILM: Battle of the Coral Sea (PG, 1959)** (b/w) **3.20** The Pale Faced Girl **3.50-4.00** 1964 in Church Street Market

Film4

11.00am Lifeboat (PG, 1944) Alfred Hitchcock's Second World War drama starring Tallulah Bankhead (b/w) (AD) **12.55pm The Shepherd of the Hills (PG, 1941)** Western starring John Wayne **2.55 Guadalcanal Diary (PG, 1943)** Second World War drama starring Preston Foster (b/w) **4.45 Canyon Passage (PG, 1946)** Western with Dana Andrews and Susan Hayward **6.35 Charlotte Gray (15, 2001)** Second World War drama with Cate Blanchett and Billy Crudup (AD) **9.00 12 Years a Slave (15, 2013)** Fact-based period drama starring Chiwetel Ejiofor (AD) **11.40 Kingsman: The Secret Service (15, 2015)** Action comedy starring Colin Firth, Taron Egerton and Samuel L Jackson (AD) **2.15am-4.00 Crawlspace (15, 2022)** Thriller with Henry Thomas

BBC3

7.00pm The Catch Up **7.05** Deadly 60. In Australia **7.30** Deadly 60. Visiting Nepal **8.00** The Cruise. Classic travelogue featuring Jane McDonald (1/12) (r) **8.30** The Cruise. The cruise ship *Galaxy* docks in Jamaica (2/12) (r) **9.00** Amanda & Alan's Italian Job. Amanda Holden and Alan Carr create a luxury holiday home (r) (AD) **9.30** Amanda & Alan's Italian Job. Designing a Sicilian kitchen (r) (AD) **10.00** RuPaul's Drag Race UK. New series. A new cast of queens take part as RuPaul kicks off the race **11.15** Smoggie Queens. Comedy starring Phil Dunning (1/6) (AD) **11.45** Smoggie Queens (AD) **12.15am** Smoggie Queens. Four episodes (AD) **2.10** Paddy & Molly: Show No Mersey **2.40am-4.00** RuPaul's Drag Race UK (SL)

ITV2

6.00am Backyard Builds **6.30** Dinner Date (AD) **7.30** The Real Housewives of Potomac **8.20** The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills **9.15** The Only Way Is Essex **10.15** Dawson's Creek **11.10** Charmed **12.10pm** Deal or No Deal (AD) **1.10** Supermarket Sweep **2.10** Celebrity Wheel of Fortune (AD) **3.10** The Only Way Is Essex **4.10** The Real Housewives of Potomac **5.00** The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills **6.00** Celebrity Catchphrase (AD) **7.00** Celebrity Wheel of Fortune (AD) **8.00** The 1% Club (AD) **9.00** Romesh Ranganathan's Parents' Evening. Game show **10.00** Changing Ends (AD) **10.35** Family Guy (AD) **11.35** American Dad! (AD) **12.35am** Bob's Burgers (AD) **1.30am-2.20** Deal or No Deal (AD, SL)

ITV3

6.00am George and Mildred **7.05** Classic Emmerdale (AD) **8.05** Classic Coronation Street (AD) **9.10** Agatha Christie's Poirot (AD) **11.30** Heartbeat (AD) **1.35pm** Midsomer Murders (AD) **3.35** Classic Emmerdale (AD) **5.15** Classic Coronation Street (AD) **5.50** Heartbeat. Gina Ward makes a surprise return to Aidensfield (AD) **6.55** Heartbeat. A terrified patient makes a shocking revelation (AD) **8.00** Vera. The detective investigates when a student falls to his death in mysterious circumstances (3/4) (AD) **10.00** Agatha Christie's Marple. The sleuth investigates the murder of old friend Father Gorman (AD) **11.50** Agatha Christie's Poirot. A killer strikes at a student hostel (AD) **2.00am-2.25** George and Mildred

ITV4

6.00am Magnum, PI (AD, SL) **8.05** Robin of Sherwood **9.05** The Professionals (AD) **10.15** Live Cycling: Tour of Britain. Coverage of stage two **3.45pm** The Sweeney **4.50** The Professionals (AD) **5.55** Minder. Terry protects a widow (AD) **7.00** Beat the Chasers **8.00** Cycling: Tour of Britain Highlights. Action from stage two **9.00** Benidorm. Madge seizes her chance of marriage (AD) **9.30** Benidorm. Telle strikes up a friendship with the Oracle (AD) **10.00** Benidorm. Kelly's mother Sylvia arrives to sort out Mateo (AD) **10.30** Benidorm. Donald and Jacqueline seek revenge (AD) **11.00** Ligue 1 Highlights **11.30** All Elite Wrestling: Collision **1.30am** Hell's Kitchen. A blind taste test **2.30am-3.00** Auto Mundial

U&Drama

6.00am Teleshopping **7.25** The Bill **8.25** Doctors **9.40** Classic Holby City **11.00** Casualty (AD) **12.00** The Bill **1.00pm** Classic EastEnders **2.20** Classic Neighbours **3.20** Sister Boniface Mysteries (AD) **4.20** Kingdom **5.20** As Time Goes By **6.00** Last of the Summer Wine **8.00** The Marlow Murder Club. A popular but tempestuous celebrity chef is murdered (5/6) (AD) **9.00** The Marlow Murder Club. Police investigate the chef's death but a new development makes them rethink everything (6/6) (AD) **10.00** New Tricks (3/10) (AD) **11.00** Copper. Drama **12.00** Lovejoy. With Joanna Lumley **1.00am** Sister Boniface Mysteries (AD) **2.00** At Home with the Braithwaites **3.00** You're Killing Me (SL) **4.00am-6.00** Teleshopping

Variations

BBC1 Scotland
2.00pm Politics Scotland 3.00-3.45 Money for Nothing 10.40 Sportscene 11.10 FILM: Creed II (2018) 1.10am-1.40 Scotcast (r)

BBC2 Wales
11.00pm-12.05am Couples Therapy

ITV1 Anglia/Border/Central/ Granada/London/Meridian/Tyne Tees/West/Westcountry/Yorkshire
10.45pm-11.15 Political Programme

ITV1 Wales
10.45pm-11.15pm Abbey Clancy: Celebrity Homes. With Heidi Range and Jodie Kidd (r)

STV
10.45pm-11.15pm G'wed (r) 12.10am-3.00 Shop on TV 4.05am-5.05 Unwind with STV

UTV
10.45pm-11.15pm Mahon's Way (r)

BBC Scotland
7.00pm News at Seven 7.30 Grand Tours of Scotland's Lochs (r) 8.00 Beechgrove Garden 8.30 Our Lives: Speed Without Limits (r) 9.00 Martin Compston's Norwegian Fling (r) 10.00 Michelle McManus Sings for the Pope (r) 11.00 Scotcast 11.30-12.00 Growing Up Scottish (r)

S4C
6.00pm Cynefin (r) 6.59 News 7.00 Heno 7.30 News; Weather 8.00 Pobol y Cwm. Griffiths pours his heart out to Diane 8.25 Gwlad y Basg: Gwilym Bowen Rhys. The musician's journey leads to the Northern Basque Country (r) 8.55 News; Weather 9.00 Cyfrinachau'r Great Escape (r) 10.00 Taclo'r Ty (r) 10.30-11.35pm Radio Fa'ma (r)

PBS America

8.00am Weathered: Earth's Extremes **8.35** Secrets of the Royal Palaces **9.35** Ancient Apocalypse **10.40** Forgotten Allies: The Search for Burma's Lost Heroes **11.45** Ancient Egypt: Life and Death in the Valley of the Kings **1.00pm** Secrets of the Royal Palaces **2.00** Ancient Apocalypse **3.05** Forgotten Allies: The Search for Burma's Lost Heroes **4.10** Ancient Egypt: Life and Death in the Valley of the Kings **5.25** Secrets of the Royal Palaces **6.25** Ancient Apocalypse **7.35** Forgotten Allies: The Search for Burma's Lost Heroes **8.35** Ancient Egypt: Life and Death in the Valley of the Kings (1/2) **9.55** Secrets of the Royal Palaces **10.55** Ancient Apocalypse **12.00** Forgotten Allies: The Search for Burma's Lost Heroes **1.00am-2.00** Weathered: Earth's Extremes

Sky Atlantic

6.00am Fish Town (r) **8.00** Billions (r) (AD) **10.15** The Last of Us (r) (AD) **12.30pm** Homicide: Life on the Street (r) **2.20** Billions (r) (AD) **4.30** The White Lotus (r) (AD) **6.45** The Last of Us. Joel fights to survive (7/9) (r) (AD) **7.50** The Last of Us. Ellie encounters a vengeful group of survivors (8/9) (r) (AD) **9.00** Fightland. London's gangland is pushed to the brink of war, but for Duke the consequences strike close to home (4/8) (r) (AD) **10.00** Dune: Prophecy. Valya Harkonnen works to combat a new threat to her long-awaited plan for a royal marriage (1/6) (r) (AD) **11.15** All Her Fault. Carrie's plans Milo's kidnapping (r) (AD) **12.20am** The Five-Star Weekend (r) (AD) **2.05** Gomorrah: The Origins (r) **4.10-6.00** Urban Secrets (r)

Sky Docs

6.00am Urban Secrets (r) **7.00** Discovering (r) (AD) **8.00** The Directors (r) **9.00** Last Call: When a Serial Killer Stalked Queer New York (r) (AD) **10.00** Vegas: The Story of Sin City (r) **11.00** Dark Horses: Italy's World Cup Triumph (r) **12.00** I Am Johnny Cash (r) (AD) **1.45pm** My Icon: Nasser Hussain (r) (AD) **2.00 FILM: Lennox — The Untold Story (15, 2020)** (AD) **4.00** The Directors (r) **5.00** Discovering (r) (AD) **6.00** The Man Who Bought Cricket (r) (AD) **7.00 FILM: Ferrari — Race to Immortality (15, 2017)** (AD) **8.50** My Icon: Linford Christie (r) **9.00** Luca: Seeing Red **11.00** Villeneuve Pironi: Racing's Untold Tragedy (r) **1.00am** Edge of the Earth (r) (AD) **2.00** The End of the Storm (r) **4.00** The Directors (r) **5.00-6.00** Discovering (r) (AD)

U&Yesterday

6.10am The Architecture the Railways Built (AD) **8.00** Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics (AD) **10.00** Rise of the Nazis **11.00** The World at War **12.00** Antiques Roadshow **2.00pm** Bangers & Cash (AD) **4.00** Rise of the Nazis **5.00** The World at War **6.00** Antiques Roadshow **7.00** Seven Worlds, One Planet. Life in North America (6/7) (AD) **8.00** Bangers & Cash. Derek heads to Barnet for a Sierra XR 4x4i (AD) **9.00** Dream Car Fixers. Taking on a 1991 VW Scirocco (AD) **10.00** Bangers & Cash. Derek collects veteran motorbikes (AD) **11.00** Bangers & Cash. A rare 1964 Ford Capri Consul coupe (AD) **12.00** Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics. A Mazda MX-5 (AD) **1.00am** Find It, Fix It, Flog It **2.00** The Architecture the Railways Built (AD) **3.00am-6.10** Teleshopping

MindGames

Tetonor Tricky No 706

160	60	19	195
63	16	44	24
20	37	31	96
171	28	84	108

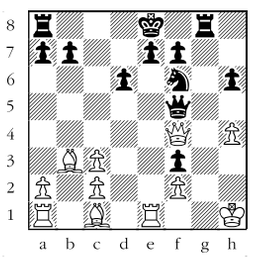
	4			6	7	8	9		12			19		32	

When complete, the strip below the grid can be split into eight pairs of numbers. Adding the numbers in a pair gives one of the 16 numbers in the grid. Multiplying them gives a different number in the grid. For example, a 4 and 6 in the strip could be paired to make 10 (4+6) and 24 (4x6) in the grid. Enter each sum below the corresponding number in the grid. The blanks in the strip must be deduced, bearing in mind the numbers are listed in ascending order.

The next Tetonor puzzle will appear on Tuesday

For more puzzles, including Mini Sudoku, extra Codeword, Train Tracks and Futoshiki go to page 10

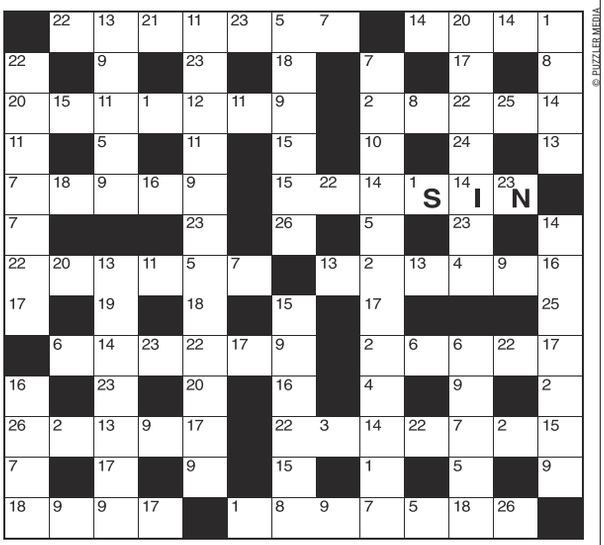
Winning Move



Black to play.
This position is from Szpar-Vovk, chess.com 2026.

Sometimes in a position the concepts are fairly clear but knitting them all together requires considerable skill. Here Black's themes are the open g-file towards the white king, the possibility of ... Qh3+ at some point and the potential of the knight to come in to e4 or g4. Can you weave these together to form a brilliant tactical finish?

Codeword No 5936



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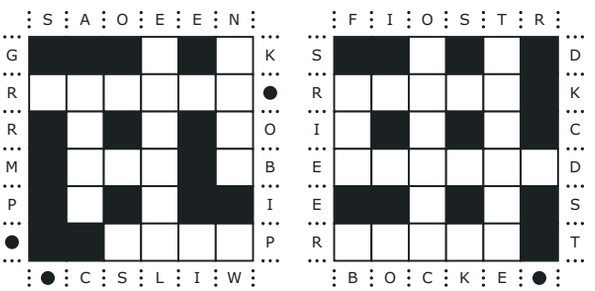
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1 S	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 I	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23 N	24	25	26

Every letter in this crossword-style grid is represented by a number from 1 to 26. Each letter of the alphabet appears in the grid at least once. Use the letters already provided to work out the identity of further letters. Enter letters in the main grid and the smaller reference grid until all 26 letters of the alphabet have been accounted for. Proper nouns are excluded. *Yesterday's solution, right*

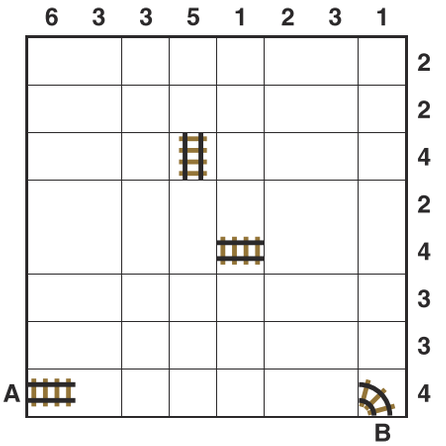
Cluelines **Stuck on Codeword?** To receive 4 random clues call 0901 293 6262 or text TIMECODE to 64343. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. Texts cost £1 plus your standard network charge. For the full solution call 0905 757 0142. If you have an old newspaper and need clues from the past 7 days, call 0905 624 0024. Calls to 0905 cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5.30pm).

Lexica Easy No 9093 Hard No 9094



Slide the letters either horizontally or vertically back into the grid to produce a completed crossword. Letters are allowed to slide over other letters

Train Tracks No 2961



Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of track go in each row and column. There are only straight sections and curved sections. The track cannot cross itself.

Quintagram® No 2663

Solve all five **cryptic** clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Sell some oven doors (4)

_ _ _ _

2 Country definitely not suppressing resistance (6)

_ _ _ _ _ _

3 Wine on display in transport hub (7)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _

4 Swear introduction of private capital saves lives (7)

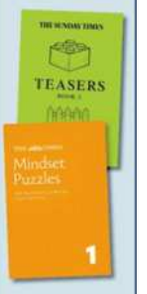
_ _ _ _ _ _ _

5 Moving to a lower station (8)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

A	A	A	D	E	E	E	I
I	L	M	N	N	O	O	O
O	O	P	P	R	R	R	R
R	S	T	T	V	W	W	Y

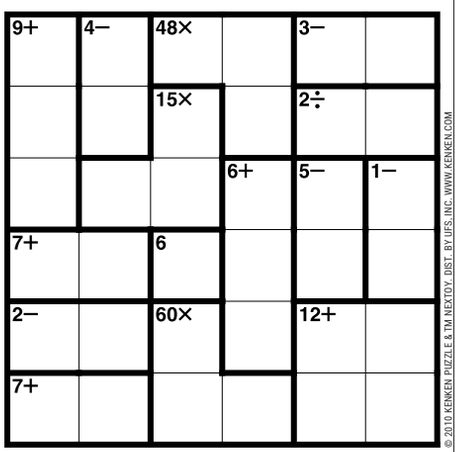
Challenge your mind with these fiendish word and number puzzles



timesbookshop.co.uk

Try Wordhunt and Picle, our new online Quick Play puzzles at thetimes.com/puzzles and on the Live app

KenKen Difficult No 6928



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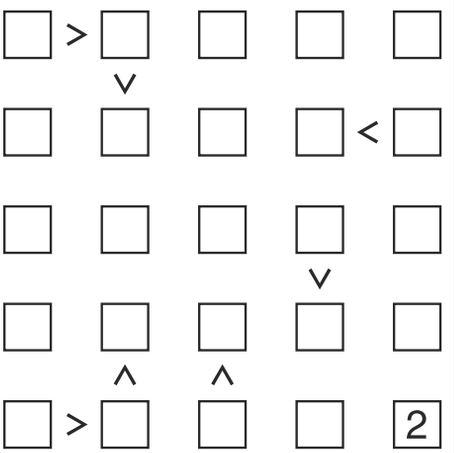
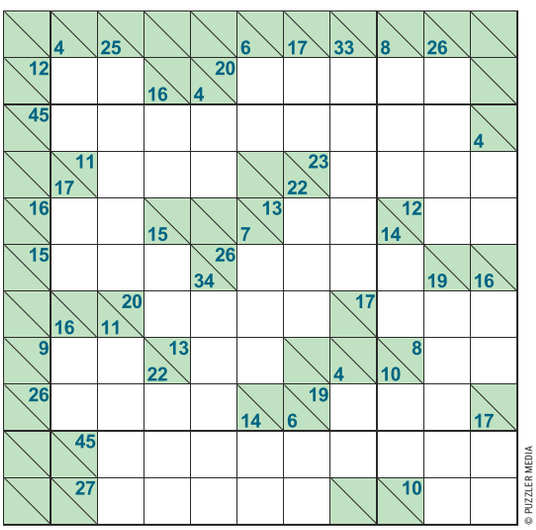
All the digits 1 to 6 must appear in every row and column. In each thick-line "block", the target number in the top left-hand corner is calculated from the digits in all the cells in the block, using the operation indicated by the symbol.

Futoshiki No 5476



Fill the blank squares so that every row and column contains each of the numbers 1 to 5 once only. The symbols between the squares indicate whether a number is larger (>) or smaller (<) than the number next to it.

Kakuro No 4435



Fill the grid using the numbers 1 to 9 only. The numbers in each horizontal or vertical run of white squares add up to the total in the triangle to its left or above it. The same number may occur more than once in a row or column, but not within the same run of white squares.

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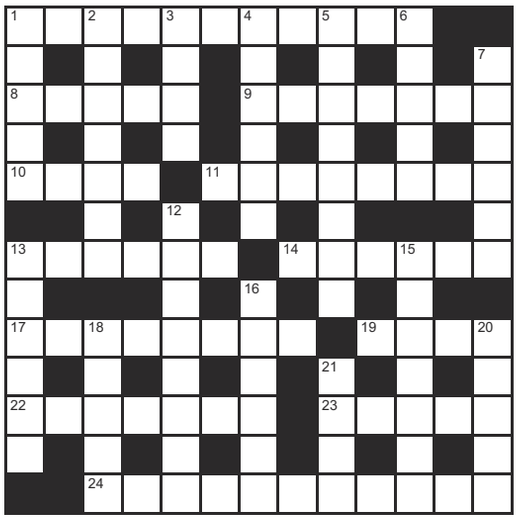
MindGames

times2 Crossword No 10,252



Across

1 Blockage, impediment (11)
8 Senior monk (5)
9 Time away from work for holiday or sickness (7)
10 In a cot or bunk, eg (4)
11 Deviating from the norm (8)
13 Homes, residences (6)
14 Belittled, humbled; *bad sea* (*anagram*) (6)
17 Unshakeable firmness of opinion (8)
19 Border on (4)
22 Leave in the lurch (7)
23 Balearic island (5)
24 Welsh university town (11)

Down

1 21st-century US president (5)
2 Below freezing point (7)
3 Repetitive method of learning (4)
4 Cantankerous (6)
5 Engrave (8)
6 Stealthy martial artist (5)
7 Hired out (6)
12 Resent (8)
13 Independent of ethical considerations (6)
15 Monetary grant (7)
16 Insufficient, meagre (6)
18 Emotional situation (5)
20 Provide with schooling (5)
21 Nutritional regime (4)

Solution to Crossword 10,251

W	I	R	E	S	■	T	U	M	U	L	U	S	■	■
E	■	O	■	T	■	U	■	U	■	I	■	U	■	■
D	E	S	C	A	R	T	E	S	■	A	Y	R	■	■
G	■	E	■	T	■	T	■	I	■	N	■	G	■	■
E	A	T	■	E	N	U	N	C	I	A	T	E	■	■
■	■	T	■	S	■	T	■	A	■	■	■	R	■	■
R	H	E	U	M	■	■	■	L	O	B	B	Y	■	■
H	■	■	■	A	■	E	■	C	■	U	■	■	■	■
O	F	F	E	N	B	A	C	H	■	R	U	T	■	■
M	■	E	■	S	■	S	■	A	■	G	■	E	■	■
B	U	N	■	H	A	I	R	I	N	E	S	S	■	■
U	■	C	■	I	■	E	■	R	■	O	■	T	■	■
S	L	E	E	P	E	R	■	S	U	N	N	Y	■	■

Need help with today's puzzle? Call 0905 757 0143 to check the answers. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Bridge Andrew Robson

In 2024, three long-established Glasgow bridge clubs, the Buchanan, the Glasgow and the St Andrew voted to amalgamate to form a new bridge club with its own dedicated premises. And so the Clyde Bridge Centre was created.

Veteran Scottish international Barnet Shenkin reports this deal from a recent match at that fabulous new venue. And the question he and I would like to challenge you with is: can 6♣ be made on best play and defence?

Let's start with the best opening lead, found at the table: a trump. The clue telling West to lead a club is his useful holding in declarer's second suit, diamonds.

Declarer won West's four of clubs lead cheaply in hand as East discarded a heart. At trick two, he led the queen of spades, covered by the king and ace, and at trick three he led the five of diamonds, East playing low. Declarer won the ace and led a second diamond.

East won the diamond perforce with his bare king and tried a hopeful ace of hearts. However, declarer ruffed, ruffed a third diamond, ruffed a second heart, ruffed a fourth diamond, ruffed a third heart, drew West's trumps and enjoyed the fifth diamond. Slam made — nicely played.

The problem for the defence was that it was *East* who won his side's diamond trick. And East held no trump to lead to remove dummy's penultimate trump. Declarer was therefore able to ruff two diamonds in dummy.

Note, it would have been no good for East to rise with the king of diamonds when declarer led that first diamond from dummy — for declarer would have let East's king win, leading to the same outcome.

Quite simply, East's king of diamonds got in the way. *Now* can you spot the winning defence? East must discard that king of diamonds at trick one (key play). No longer will it get in the defence's way. It will then be *West* who wins the defence's diamond trick, whereupon a second club will sink the slam.

Theoretically, 6♣ can always be defeated — but only on a club lead and the king of diamonds discard. If you found that jettisoning brilliancy then can I suggest you contact the authorities to make your case for international selection.

andrew.robson@thetimes.co.uk

Dealer: South, Vulnerability: Neither

Teams | Advanced

	♠ A10543 ♥ 876 ♦ 95 ♣ J92	
♠ KJ ♥ K932 ♦ QJ86 ♣ 1054	N W E S	♠ 98762 ♥ AQJ1054 ♦ K3 ♣ -
	♠ Q ♥ - ♦ A10742 ♣ AKQ8763	

S	W	N	E
1♣	Pass	1♠ (1)	2♥
3♦	3♥	4♣	4♥
6♣	End		

(1) Worth scraping up a 1♥/♠ response holding five points and a five-card suit.

Contract: 6♣, Opening Lead: ♣4

Brain Trainer

EASY 15	x 3	+ 21	÷ 3	+ 19	DOUBLE IT	– 12	÷ 5	DOUBLE IT	÷ 4	ANSWER
MEDIUM 154	x 2	DOUBLE IT	– 4	÷ 9	+½ OF IT	x 4	+ 20	DOUBLE IT	÷ 4	ANSWER
HARDER 11	TIMES ITSELF	x 5	– 287	-⅔ OF IT	+½ OF IT	– 75	÷ 4	TIMES ITSELF	– 65	ANSWER

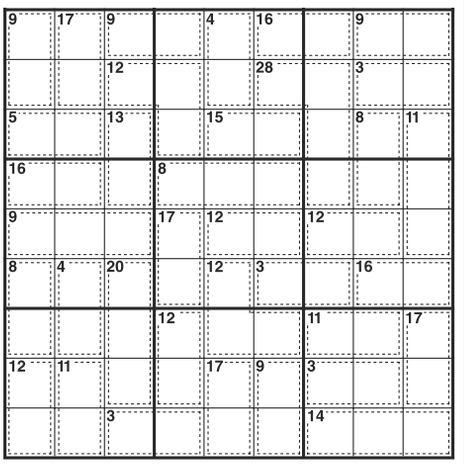
Polygon

From these letters, make words of **four** or more letters, always including the central letter. Answers must be in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, excluding capitalised words, plurals, conjugated verbs (past tense etc), adverbs ending in LY, comparatives and superlatives.
How you rate 12 words, average; 17, good; 20, very good; 23, excellent

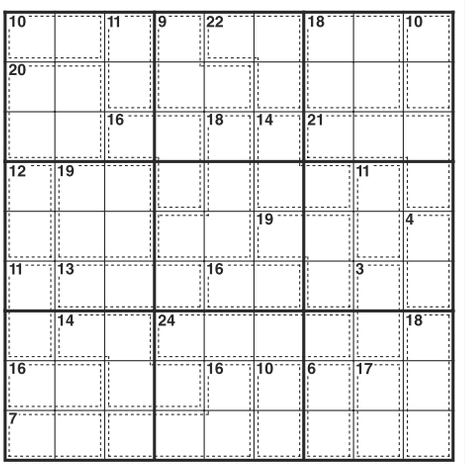
Yesterday's answers

amiss, lamp, limp, mail, malt, mass, mast, milt, miss, missal, mist, palm, palmist, passim, plasm, psalm, **psalmist**, salmi, samp, simp, slam, slim, smalt, spam, spasm, stamp, tamp

Killer Gentle No 10,910



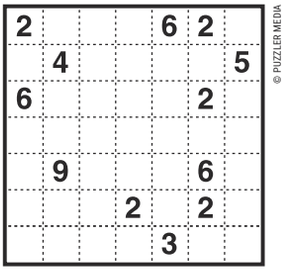
Killer Tough No 10,911



As with standard Sudoku, fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.

Cluelines Stuck on Sudoku, Killer or KenKen? Call 0901 293 6263 before midnight to receive four clues for any of today's puzzles. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Cell Blocks No 5819



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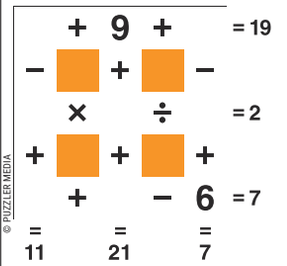
Divide the grid into square or rectangular blocks, each containing one digit only. Every block must contain the number of cells indicated by the digit inside it.

Set Square No 4438



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Enter each of the numbers from 1 to 9 in the grid, so that the six sums work. We've placed two numbers to get you started. Each sum should be calculated left to right or top to bottom.

Please note, BODMAS does not apply

Solutions

Quick Cryptic 3396

R	E	F	U	S	E	■	C	A	R	A	F	E	■	■
E	■	L	■	P	■	■	N	■	T	■	L	■	■	■
C	H	E	R	I	S	H	■	E	N	S	U	E	■	■
E	■	E	■	N	■	E	■	C	■	E	■	V	■	■
N	I	C	E	■	C	A	R	D	G	A	M	E	■	■
T	■	E	■	D	■	R	■	O	■	■	■	N	■	■
■	■	S	P	E	C	T	A	T	O	R	■	■	■	■
W	■	■	■	F	■	F	■	E	■	E	■	C	■	■
E	X	A	M	I	N	E	R	■	A	S	I	A	■	■
B	■	C	■	A	■	L	■	B	■	C	■	C	■	■
B	A	C	O	N	■	T	H	R	O	U	G	H	■	■
E	■	R	■	C	■	■	R	■	E	■	E	■	■	■
D	E	A	L	E	R	■	C	R	E	D	I	T	■	■

Codeword 5935

B	O	R	E	D	O	M	■	P	O	S	E	R	■	■
I	■	E	■	A	■	I	■	O	■	T	■	I	■	■
F	O	G	E	Y	■	S	E	R	V	A	N	T	■	■
O	■	A	■	L	■	E	■	E	■	T	■	Z	■	■
C	O	L	L	I	E	R	Y	■	J	U	R	Y	■	■
A	■	■	■	G	■	Y	■	H	■	R	■	■	■	■
L	O	A	T	H	E	■	M	Y	S	E	L	F	■	■
■	■	Q	■	T	■	H	■	S	■	■	■	L	■	■
C	R	U	X	■	L	I	S	T	E	R	I	A	■	■
O	■	E	■	S	■	A	■	E	■	E	■	V	■	■
W	O	O	D	C	U	T	■	R	E	C	T	O	■	■
E	■	U	■	R	■	U	■	I	■	A	■	U	■	■
R	I	S	K	Y	■	S	C	A	R	P	E	R	■	■

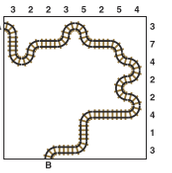
Kakuro 4434

4	2	1	■	6	9	■	1	4
9	7	8	■	3	1	7	4	2	8
7	8	2	1	9	■	3	1	■
■	9	2	■	■	8	6	2	1
■	9	3	■	8	2	1	■	9	2
6	1	■	3	9	1	■	9	5	■
9	7	1	4	■	■	7	1	■	■
■	■	3	9	■	3	9	5	8	7
9	5	2	7	8	1	■	3	6	2
6	1	■	1	7	■	■	2	9	8

Sudoku 17,073

3	1	9	2	8	7	5	6	4
2	7	4	3	5	6	9	8	1
6	8	5	4	9	1	7	2	3
8	4	3	9	7	5	2	1	6
7	2	6	1	4	8	3	5	9
9	5	1	6	2	3	4	7	8
5	9	2	8	1	4	6	3	7
1	6	7	5	3	9	8	4	2
4	3	8	7	6	2	1	9	5

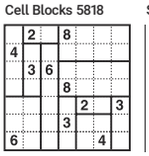
Train Tracks 2960



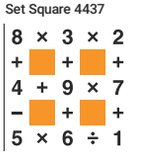
Sudoku 17,074

3	2	7	9	4	5	6	1	8
8	9	6	1	2	3	4	5	7
4	1	5	6	7	8	2	3	9
9	5	4	2	8	1	7	6	3
2	6	1	3	5	7	8	9	4
7	8	3	4	9	6	5	2	1
5	4	2	8	1	9	3	7	6
6	7	9	5	3	4	1	8	2
1	3	8	7	6	2	9	4	5

Cell Blocks 5818



Set Square 4437

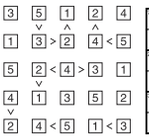


Lexica 9091

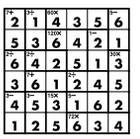
Sudoku 17,075

1	8	7	2	5	3	4	9	6
6	2	3	4	9	1	5	8	7
5	4	9	7	6	8	2	1	3
2	7	1	6	8	4	9	3	5
9	3	6	5	1	7	8	4	2
4	5	8	3	2	9	6	7	1
7	9	2	1	4	5	3	6	8
3	6	4	8	7	2	1	5	9
8	1	5	9	3	6	7	2	4

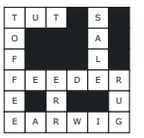
Futoshiki 5475



KenKen 6927



Lexica 9092



Killer 10,908

7	8	1	2	4	6	9	3	5
4	3	9	5	8	7	6	2	1
5	6	2	3	1	9	8	4	7
1	5	7	9	3	4	2	8	6
9	2	3	1	6	8	5	7	4
8	4	6	7	5	2	1	9	3
3	9	4	6	2	1	7	5	8
6	7	8	4	9	5	3	1	2
2	1	5	8	7	3	4	6	9

Killer 10,909

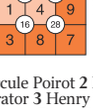
5	1	2	7	4	8	9	6	3
8	6	9	5	3	1	7	4	2
3	4	7	6	2	9	1	8	5
9	8	3	1	5	4	2	7	6
6	2	1	8	9	7	5	3	4
7	5	4	2	6	3	8	9	1
4	7	8	3	1	2	6	5	9
1	9	5	4	8	6	3	2	7
2	3	6	9	7	5	4	1	8

Today's solutions

Concise Quintagram
1 Holy
2 Long
3 Norfolk
4 Treasure
5 Christmas

Cryptic Quintagram
1 Vend
2 Norway
3 Airport
4 Promise
5 Waterloo

Sakuro 4837



Brain Trainer
Easy 7
Medium 214
Harder 376

Word watch

Osmatic (b) Having a good sense of smell (*Collins*) **Kip** (c) The tip of a salmon's lower jaw (*OED*) **Ololiuqui** (b) A hallucinogenic plant (*Collins*)

Chess — Winning Move

1 ... Ne4! allows the knight to steal the show. The threat to invade on f2 is decisive, eg 2 Bxf7+ (this is the best try: 2 Qxf5 Nxf2+ 3 Kh2 Rg2 is a lovely mate and if 2 Qh2 Rg2 wins) 2 ... Kd8! (the only move to win) 3 Bxg8 Nxf2+ 4 Kgl (4 Kh2 Qh3+ 5 Kgl Qg2 mate) 4 ... Nh3+ 5 Kh2 Nxf4 with a decisive material advantage

Quiz

1 Hercule Poirot **2** Interior decorator **3** Henry VIII **4** Princess Diana **5** Parachute, specifically an Irvin Air Chute **6** Bristol **7** Western Australia **8** Racecourse or horse racing facility **9** Abbey National **10** David Niven **11** John Suckling **12** Porfirio Rubirosa. The character is called Dax Xenos **13** Sycorax, as in Caliban's mother in *The Tempest* **14** Carl Lewis **15** Go-kart

THE TIMES

03.09.26

MindGames

For extra puzzles See page 10

Word watch
David Parfitt

Osmatic
a Extremely tall
b Having a good sense of smell
c Produced within the bones

Kip
a A small fruit tartlet
b A smokehouse
c The tip of a salmon's lower jaw

Ololiuqui
a A very dry sherry
b A hallucinogenic plant
c Dried strips of beef

Answers on page 15

Sudoku

Mild No 17,076

				6		9		5
			8					
		1	4		9	2		
	7	8		9				1
9			5		8			6
		3		2	7			9
8		5				6	3	
						5	9	
2			3	5	4			

Fiendish No 17,077

			4					
		3		6		2		
	8	9	1				4	
1		4						3
	9				5	1		
				3				4
	7			1			6	2
		2				4		7
			5		7	9	3	

Super fiendish No 17,078

			5					3
		2	4	8				6
	1							8
							2	
2	8		9		1		6	5
	3							
9							7	
6				2	5	8		
4					8			

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Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

The Times Daily Quiz
Olav Bjortomt

1 Edward Bluemel has been cast as which sleuth in the six-part BBC drama *Hercule*?

2 Frank Lloyd Wright referred to people with which job as "inferior desecrators"?

3 Bishop John Fisher was beheaded in 1535 for refusing to recognise which king's supremacy over the church?

4 *Swan Song* is Charles Spencer's 2026 memoir of which princess?

5 Members of the Caterpillar Club have escaped safely from a failing aircraft using which fabric device?

6 In 2022, which city in southwest England voted to abolish its directly elected mayor?

ALAMY

7 Swan River daisies are named after a river in which Australian state?

8 The Parisian fashion house Longchamp is named after what type of sporting venue?

9 In 1989, what became the first building society in the UK to demutualise?

10 Which English actor played the title role in the 1948 film *Bonnie Prince Charlie*?

11 Which Cavalier poet (1609–41) wrote the poem *A Ballad Upon a Wedding*?

12 Which Dominican playboy and diplomat inspired the romantic hero in Harold Robbins' 1966 novel *The Adventurers*?

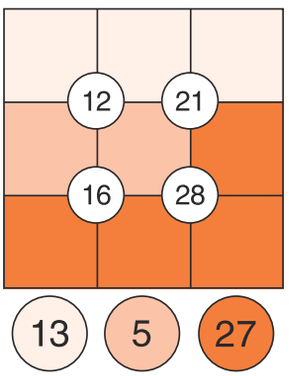
13 Named after a fictional witch, what is the largest irregular moon of Uranus?

14 F1 star Lewis Hamilton is named after which American winner of nine Olympic golds?

15 Which vehicle is pictured?

Answers on page 15

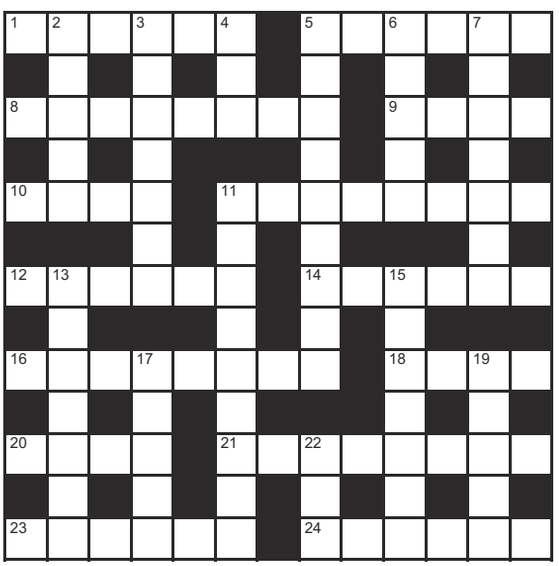
Sakuro
No 4837



Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each colour total is correct

For interactive puzzles visit thetimes.com

The Times Quick Cryptic
No 3397 by Wurm



Across
1 Dog do Irish playwright bags (6)
5 Cruel sort, it is time to arrest duke (6)
8 Criminal unnamed holds South Polar explorer (8)
9 Snake-haired female leaves cheese for French writer (4)
10 Killer inside Windsor Castle (4)
11 Charlie to feed a stray lately — feline one? (5,3)
12 Scots girl sails terribly close to shore (6)
14 Reproductive organ primarily adapted to marsupial (6)
16 Monster child devouring Greek character (8)
18 Grandmother beginning to annoy idiot (4)
20 Stone dropped into excellent wine (4)
21 Lifeless hair — intractable problem (8)
23 Male voice on the radio for £10 (6)
24 Dye and ink misused in class (6)

Down
2 Poet in with Romeo (5)
3 Disavowals from Stormy Daniels (7)
4 Insect losing tail is no more (3)
5 Bloomer in tabloid — female let down (9)
6 Silly involving two Zulus in do-it-yourself (5)
7 Dried fruit for Ottoman lady (7)
11 Great ruler in a country invaded by former queen (9)
13 American paper under discussion (2,5)
15 Chinese dynasty ruled and was sociable (7)
17 One spreading legs — it may cause tears (5)
19 Hotel occupies lovely position (5)
22 Bird among skuas heading north (3)

Yesterday's solution on page 15

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